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FURTHER LETTERS FROM A
MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

By the Same Author

SOME LETTERS FROM A MAN OF
NO IMPORTANCE

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FROM A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE
1914-1929

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FOREWORD

WHEN, a few years ago, some *Letters from a Man of No Importance* were published, the writer was very doubtful as to whether any of the public would consider them worth the trouble of reading; these doubts were dispelled by the kindly and, apparently, general attention paid to them, and here must lie the excuse for a further, and final, series. In the last Letter allusion is made to a forthcoming visit to Algiers, and it is sufficient to say that the hopes entertained for the recovery to health of one of the correspondents did not materialize.

No less than in the earlier volume, the gaps between the dates of letters indicate that frequent meetings, whether in London or Paris, took place between the writers. In some cases only fragments of letters will be found, and the correct inference to be drawn is that the remaining portions of the conversations on paper are of even less interest than those submitted. This may also be taken as the reason for withholding the very sketchy and infrequent correspondence which occurred during the two years when both men of no importance were in France.

June 1932.

FURTHER LETTERS FROM A
MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

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FURTHER LETTERS FROM A MAN OF NO IMPORTANCE

6th *August* 1914

WRITE me a few lines when you can and I will do the same however jerky and disjointed our letters may be, and I suppose everything will be liable to censorship. The French seem to have thrown politics to the wind and to be solid as a nation. The oration at Jaures' funeral is an early proof of this; how curious that the arch-pacifist should be murdered just when his country is plunging into war. I hear the Duc de Guise has prayed the President to be allowed to serve as a simple soldier and, if desired, under an assumed name, and that King Alfonso has made it a personal favour. But I suppose he is up against the law and I daresay some of the scions of Orleans and Bonaparte families will try to be enrolled here.

Recruiting is the one word on everyone's lips to-day and how and where is the question. Meanwhile Haldane must be proud to know that within five minutes of the declaration of war the prepared orders were on the way to the Generals-in-Chief; the Kaiser would grit his teeth to know this.

10th August 1914

THE Empress Marie seems to have been treated with scant courtesy, being stopped at Berlin on her way home and sent back by Copenhagen. But this is nothing to what was done to Jules Cambon, who was not allowed to choose his own route to France; his cheque for the tickets for the journey was refused and he was told that he must pay for them in gold and meanwhile he was shut up in a compartment almost as if he were a prisoner. Baron Schoen, I am told, on the other hand was treated with the utmost respect by the French railway authorities and every facility given him. I think you know Baron Wedel pretty well; do ask him if it is true that when Schoen, after receiving his passports, called to wish him good-bye he said, '*Il faut avouer que la France a fait tout ce qu'elle a pu pour éviter la guerre.*' If so, what a testimony! Yes, truly we are fighting not only because our honour as regards Belgium was at stake, but to crush the accursed system of Prussianism, which, since 1866, has threatened to terrorize Europe.

Now for my little bit of personal news; I have just been given a job at the W.O. where it is thought my knowledge of French may be useful. It is, of course, a very subordinate, but a rather interesting post. I am warned (perhaps rather unnecessarily) to be very careful what I write,

AUGUST 1914

so if my letters are largely *pluie et beau temps*, you will understand.

19th August 1914

THE W.O. is indeed a hive of industry and also a target for many reproaches. There have been pungent and pathetic comments as to denying opportunities for good-byes and 'send-offs,' but as the B.E.F. has been landed in France without a single mishap, I think people will agree for the future that it is well to subordinate sentiment to safety. The S. of S. even respectfully dissuaded the Queen from going to see her regiment, the 18th Hussars, as it would be an indication that they were about to go overseas. He is adamant as to silence with regard to movements of troops. The Duke of — said to Kitchener, 'Is there any harm in my asking when the — Brigade is likely to start?' 'Oh, no, there is not the least harm in your *asking*,' was the courteous, if somewhat disconcerting reply. There is a rumour that the King, when the time comes, will prorogue Parliament in person; if so, history will indeed repeat itself, as exactly sixty years ago

AUGUST 1914

Queen Victoria did this, and thanked the Commons for the supplies 'to carry on the War in cordial co-operation with the Emperor of the French.' Le petit Mensdorff could with great difficulty be persuaded to go; to him it was unthinkable that his country should be at war with ours. I wonder if he remembered the wiggling King Edward gave him over Bosnia and Herzegovina; it was the one bitter drop in the sweet cup he was always sipping here. Rawlinson is very busy, very good, and oh, so important with his recruiting work. C. Lowther is getting up a Sussex battalion and frets at any restriction; as a great concession he was given a personal interview and after he had held forth for some time, Rawly said, 'Perhaps now you will allow me to speak.' Upon which C. L. coolly answered, 'Yes, if you will be quick, as I am rather busy.' Rawly must have nearly fallen back into the waste-paper basket.

26th August 1914

THE fog of war has apparently lifted at the Front, and disclosed the enemy in unexpected strength. I know, for a fact, that Lord Kitchener

urged that our detrainment would be too far forward and that our first steps might have to be backward, which he thought very bad for the morale of the troops; but he was overruled by Joffre's emissaries who were backed in their opinion by Sir John. It may well be a case of 'I told you so'; Lord K. wanted our concentration to be at Amiens. How one longs for news every hour, and how one dreads the casualties. I fear we have suffered badly the last two days, and it is so dreadful to sit here in comparative comfort and make little jokes as one goes about one's work, while one's friends out there are wounded – or perhaps worse – and, anyhow, hungry and worn. I gather that Smith-Dorrien arrived in time to take over his command just before the German onrush; he is a fine fighter and knows his job from A to Z. It was very sad about Grierson, though whether he would have been as good in command of a Corp as in an office is open to doubt; as a Staff Officer he had probably no equal in the British Army. Until last year, it was cut and dried that he should be Chief of the Staff in the event of war; but at manœuvres he did not 'get on' with Sir John, so the appointment fell through. If manœuvres had taken place this year, Rawlinson would have taken charge of the King and Davidson [later Maj.-General Sir John Davidson] would have looked after the Queen.

4th September 1914

RECRUITING is still going full steam ahead, and the Kitchener units will soon take shape and get some of the training without which it would be murder to send them to the Front. I believe the King does not in the least resent the label which has somehow got itself attached to these new formations which are K.'s creation and seemingly as proud of this as of being soldiers of the King. In fact, the King is concerned with nothing except winning the war; even when Winston Churchill casually remarked that if Buckingham Palace were bombed by a Zeppelin it would have a very stimulating effect upon the people, the King only mildly suggested it might have a very depressing effect on him. *The Times* story of Sunday, which represented our Army as in desperate plight, was a ghastly mistake which will not be repeated. Kitchener sent for F. E. Smith who, as head of the Press Bureau, was responsible, but to the amazement of the latter did not give him any sort of scolding, only some precise directions for the future. He had either to sack him or to refrain from reproach, which would only have left soreness and done no good. The implication was quite sufficient, and F. E. retired a chastened, but much relieved, man.

S E P T E M B E R 1914

20th September 1914

I WONDER if this will be a true prophecy when the communiqué, as to the Battle of the Marne, was submitted for S. of S.'s approval. He struck out the word which had been employed, 'important success' and substituted 'decisive victory.' F. E. asked again to make sure, and received the answer that the term to be used was to be 'the decisive battle of the Marne.' You have heard of Lord K.'s sudden visit to France on 1st September, which is, of course, now an open secret, but during the thirty-six hours he was away not a soul – not even the Army Council – knew where he was except the King, Brade and the two Secretaries. I believe Sir John wanted to retreat temporarily from the Front Line altogether and refit and refresh his Force behind Paris; had not K. stopped him, our troops might have taken no part in the Battle of the Marne. As it is, the Kaiser will have to forego his proposed residence at Chantilly and cancel the breakfast which the Boche management at the Hotel Astoria were preparing for him.

Your letter of the 17th just received; are your posts disorganized? they are never very good. I hear dear old Madame Waddington is busy as a bee with comforts for *poilus*.

11th November 1914

ONE day follows another with its tale of fierce fighting and its fearful list of casualties. I fear 'Conk' Marker has been very badly wounded; before the War he and George Morris ranked as the two most distinguished of the little group of scientific Guards' officers. Sir John telegraphed to the War Office that if Princess Beatrice wished, her son's body should be sent home; the Princess very rightly refused – though it must have been an extra tug at her heartstrings to do so – and said her son must lie with his fallen comrades. I remember Princess Christian did the same when all arrangements were being made to send the body of her son home from South Africa.

I suppose the Queen sees the secret reports which the King gets twice a day; Wigram calls every morning in Carlton Gardens for the early morning bulletin, but it has also been arranged that Queen Alexandra shall get a special communiqué; nothing of course to do with movements of troops, but anything else which is likely to interest her. I believe she reads these and burns them with her own hands so that no one shall learn anything from her which is in any way secret.

The men are still coming in well, but the other day Lord K. said that the important thing was that the British Army should reach its high-water

mark at the beginning of the third year of the War. This when politicians are chattering about (and soldiers are beginning to hope for) a finish in the Spring. *Qui vivra verra*, but *qui vivra*? I hear also how the S. of S. solved a little social difficulty. An officer of the Guards had been named as second-in-command to one of the new battalions; his very highly born wife was delighted and made arrangements for taking a house, etc., when Lloyd heavily descended and said the officer must stay with his own Guards battalion and go overseas in his turn. The relatives, who are Territorial magnates, protested that this was most unfair, and that his extra regimental appointment could not be cancelled; Lloyd was inflexible, and there was something like an impasse. The matter was referred to K. who simply said: 'Let the officer, if he has a grievance, put it on paper, and it will be sympathetically inquired into.' The officer could not allege as a grievance that he had to go with the Guards to France, so with—or rather to—the Guards he has gone, and very well has he done.

I am so glad that you too have 'got busy.' You and I have come to an age when we might be expected only to look on, and one sees it as an act of grace that one should be allowed to do anything, however modest the job may be, and yours will have much of the character of a work of mercy.

NOVEMBER 1914

13th November 1914

IT seems as if the battle had died down for the time; the All-Highest has hurled his masses against our line, and the line has bled but never broken. Ypres will be burnt into our memories so long as breath is in our bodies. One hears that the Kaiser tiptoed as near the Front as he dared, hoping to make a pompous entry into the town, but when his Guards failed in their assault, he slunk back again. Perhaps he is no longer quite so sure that '*Gott ist mit uns.*' Our line on the salient has been described to me like the edge of an open fan with Ypres as its handle, the only way out from the edge being down the spokes of the fan to the handle; the flanks are held by French and Belgian troops.

Everyone is very busy, or wants to be very busy, and our military charities are a little chaotic, if one has to judge from the appeals for each and every kind which duly appear in the papers; and one might suppose that our battalions are shivering and starving at the Front, whereas supplies of all kinds are ready for them whenever the enemy gives them breathing space to get them. Funds, of course, have been required, the response has been magnificent, and the administration on the whole very good, though one fears there has been some frittering away of resources. Leagues, societies and committees have sprung

NOVEMBER 1914

up like mushrooms, and the efforts of a good many well-meaning individuals have probably resulted in a certain amount of waste; one's only fear is lest the stream of benevolence should, as the months – or years – pass on, run dry, especially if donations are not used to the highest advantage. Perhaps some system of co-ordination will be devised; is there anything of the sort in Paris?

17th November 1914

ANYHOW, Lord Roberts died within sound of the guns, and his last duty was with the Indian Troops, who were the apple of his eye. I believe he had a bad crossing to Boulogne and was frightfully sea-sick; but this must have strained him, and rendered him more susceptible to chill, and it was with difficulty he could be persuaded to put on his overcoat when inspecting the men as he wanted to be 'as like them' as possible. He has been so good these three months, never criticizing, only helping where he could with helpful suggestions.

The 6th November was indeed a Household

Cavalry day. As far as one could gather it was the Brigade which actually barred the Germans from penetrating into Ypres and made good the ground the French had just lost. I believe they have been nicknamed the Fire Brigade because they are being incessantly turned out for some alarm. Hugh Dawnay is an irreparable loss to the regiment and to the Army; I say this deliberately, for he really was, and was being discovered to be, a military genius.

My beloved nephew has come back for a few days' leave and has covered himself with credit in the last fighting, where his battalion suffered atrociously. Such a joy to his mother, who is ill. Her only boy! God help these mothers of only boys.

The Duc de Vendôme is anxious to be attached to our army, but he seems rather pompous, wants to see the S. of S. himself, thinks it derogatory to be received by an underling, etc., so it does not sound as if he would be very useful at the Front.

The Grand-duke Michael was for some time perpetually telephoning to ask if he could come and see S. of S. for a few moments; he had a message from the Czar and so forth. I believe at the last interview Lord K. suggested to him that he should go to the Russian Front and send in fortnightly reports, since when a welcome silence has prevailed.

Lord K. told the Prince of Wales two months

DECEMBER 1914

ago that as soon as we had a settled line he should go to France; I suppose, as the fighting has died down, our front line is fixed now: anyhow, the Prince has been told to report himself to Sir John, with whose staff he will work for the present. When his battalion went without him, the Prince broke down in Probyn's room at Marlborough House and wept bitter tears: he felt his exalted rank as something of a degradation if it kept him back when his comrades were joining the fray. I am sure it will be found that with his slender frame, he has nerves of steel and the heart of a lion.

I have seen many letters, or extracts from them, from boys who have been fighting like heroes, who a year ago thought a public school match the height of rivalry: and they seem to feel the toil and the suffering and the bloodshed so much more for their men than themselves.

8th December 1914

I SEE Dmitri has been badly wounded; is he engaged to a daughter of the Czar? I should have thought cousinship would have forbidden.

I am glad your Grand Duchess Marie sent away the German servant, however faithful and devoted he had been; to retain a German in an Entente household opens the door to suspicion if not to danger. We had a good deal of trouble in this respect for some little time, and one of the most difficult to deal with was Mrs. B. whose husband had an important command at the Front. One would have thought that, apart from other considerations, at such a moment an enemy about one's person would have been disagreeable. I hope the City Companies will remove the Kaiser from the list of their Freemen; it will only be a pin-prick for the All-Highest, but it will be a further proof what we in our tight little island think of the Imperial butcher who is gloating over the desecration and destruction of Louvain and Ypres. *Per contra*, it must be a long time since a foreign Sovereign was invested with the Garter in his own country, and it was a very happy thought of the King to bring it over to King Albert.

The stories of German brutalities in Belgium are being verified, and are of course the worse because Germany invaded Belgium for her own convenience. The Kaiser had the impudence to send the Queen of Spain a telegram of condolence on her brother being killed. She refused at first even to reply but was persuaded to send an acknowledgement, but of the stiffest kind.

22nd December 1914

It sounds like mockery to wish anybody a Merry Christmas, but one hopes that things will be made as bright as possible for the men at the Front and the children at home. I hear that the Bumbles at one of the Institutes suggested that to impress the situation on the juvenile inmates, they should be deprived of the egg they usually have for breakfast on Xmas morning. The Americans as opulent neutrals have sent over a ship full of Christmas presents for British and German troops. The ship was to call at Liverpool and go on to Hamburg. In order to *amadouer* the Americans, it was decided to send one of the Ministers to the Front to receive the packages, and the choice is Samuel. He is a very worthy man, but it seems odd to select him to accept gifts intended to mark the Nativity. Well, all the best wishes which the season can suggest and circumstances allow.

The Prince of Wales has jumped on any suggestion that he should come home even for a couple of days.

I wonder if your wounded are as wonderful as ours; so plucky and patient, and grateful, whereas it is we who owe them everything

3rd March 1915

THIS story comes to me; have you heard it? Madame Joffre was looking at a photo of the General in a shop window and made a disapproving remark of it to a friend. Two little midinettes, to whom Joffre is a hero of heroes, overheard her and thought she was belittling the man himself, and one of them burst out with: '*En tout cas, Madame, vous coucheriez très volontiers avec lui.*' Joffre's task cannot be rendered easier by Clemenceau perpetually rubbing it in that the Boche is within 60 miles of Paris, but I believe nothing disturbs Papa's equanimity, and his brain is probably at its busiest when he seems to be in his calmest moment.

I saw yesterday a letter from a boy at the Front – one of those wonderful letters so pathetic because they are so joyous – in which he said, 'Kitchener and Joffre seem to be always silent, while the politicians seem to be always talking.'

Kitchener dined on guard two nights ago, the first dinner of the Welsh Guards. They broke a hitherto inflexible rule and made dinner 8.30 as he could not get there sooner; everyone thought he would make the occasion stiff, but instead he not only talked to everybody but seemed to make others talk, and was evidently reluctant to leave at 11, but that rule could not be broken even for him.

20th March 1915

YES, verily, there was as much ammunition fired off at the three days' battle of Neuve Chapelle as in the two and a half years of the Boer War. Kitchener told someone when he took office that he would not have a good night's rest till he had a million rifles with the men behind them. He is as busy as ever getting the rifles, but shells, shells are all the cry just now. Ours may be short in quantity but they are anyhow all right in quality, and the same cannot be said for the French. The bursting of those guns was a dreadful business. I don't know if it was *propter hoc* or only *post hoc*, but in the autumn a French General came over here to advocate the design of a shell which could be manufactured quickly. Everybody thought much of it except the M.G.O. who said it was dangerous, and would not have anything to do with it; it looks as if he were right.

I hear a little story which, if true, shows how a sense of humour can ward off a wound. When Sir John was preparing the Neuve Chapelle operation, he asked if he might keep the secret to himself, to which the S. of S. willingly agreed. Just before the day he wrote that he was sending his private secretary, who in private life is a stockbroker, to explain his plan of campaign. This was consciously – or unconsciously – a slight, as of course a Staff Officer ought to have been

APRIL 1915

the emissary. Someone asked the Secretary of State if he would give a sharp answer, and he said: Oh no, he would telegraph to French: 'Many thanks for sending Fitzgerald, but just now I have no money to invest.'

2nd April 1915

WITH Lord Rothschild goes out one of the largest hearts – with the thinnest crust of bad manners – in London. His kind actions could be multiplied *ad infinitum*, and they were the kind actions of heart and head, not merely of the cheque book. As you know, he hated to be thanked and this was perhaps as well, for people are so often not only unthankful but actually vindictive towards their benefactors and their victims. G. said to Lord Rothschild one day: 'I suppose Sir H. W. was grateful for all you did for him.' 'Grateful?' was the reply, 'if one does anybody a good turn it is generally a question of getting somewhere under shelter from their abuse.'

The King and Queen had tea with Kitchener the other afternoon, only Lady Ripon and Lady

MAY 1915

Derby to meet them; the Queen spent a happy half-hour afterwards in going over every room which she knew so well and noting any changes.

Italy continues to *se faire valoir*, and well may Cambon say: '*Nos bons amis, les Italiens, attendent avec impatience le moment pour voler au secours des vainqueurs.*'

I am glad your new work will be well away from Paris, healthier in every sense, as it will be outside of the zone of the armies. Will you be able to tell me exactly where it is, after you have settled down? The ways of the Croix Rouge are wonderful: they certainly love to rope in willing workers as well as cash. I fancy at first they were rather put to shame by our organization, or their lack of it, but they have made, I gather from you, great strides these last six months.

10th May 1915

It is mere repetition of the obvious to write or speak of what one is always thinking – the gorgeous gallantry and dogged patience of our men; they seem to take it for granted that they must toil and bleed, if called upon, without

any murmurs other than the 'grouse' which is the soldier's traditional vent-hole. Whether they are the old professionals or 'period of the War,' they seem equally keen, equally cheery, and as far as one can make out, nearly equally efficient. But on the broad stream of good report which floats home, one can sometimes detect little ripples which suggest special merit. Of course the Guards have a special standard as regards physique and moral and are, in a sense, a thing apart. Active service has evidently pulled the Household Cavalry Brigade together; the reservists from the Cavalry of the Line must have found things strange at first, and I heard their method of addressing their N.C.O.'s caused old-established Life Guards to raise their eyebrows in pious horror. But it was soon found that the N.C.O.'s knew their men, who could be led but not driven. I believe that the Dragoons on the march quickly showed the Households a thing or two. They could produce rations, whether authorized or not, as a conjuror produces rabbits; they could groom and cook equally well and rapidly, and it took something of startling surprise to keep them from their daily shave. Dragoons also quickly changed any previous opinion they may have entertained as to Life Guards or Blues being feather-bed soldiers, and recognized them not only as fine fighters and the best of good fellows, but as *facile principes* in the matter of horsemanship. I believe at first there was some little nervousness about

MAY 1915

the Inniskillings who, if Orangemen in theory, are apt to observe all Irish festivals impartially, but they have never given the slightest trouble in this respect and have covered themselves with credit. I heard this, and a great deal more – which I will some day tell you – from H. who, of course, refrained from mentioning his own exploits. I don't suppose that, man for man, any unit is before or after another, and discipline and conduct is the marvel of the French, soldier or civilian. As to the latter, you can probably bear witness. I hear also of many cases where the athlete, the very 'manly' man, has broken down under strain where the fellow one thought to be rather effeminate, or anyhow the reverse of the 'spit of a soldier', has come through with flying colours and has wrung from his C.O., who at first looked a little askance at him, heartiest commendation. Perhaps it is just the story of the oak and the willow, or perhaps a keen sense of honour and a lively imagination has been a great stimulant under stress of circumstances. Of course, the physical courage of both types has never been in question. I don't know why I have written this, except that if one has a spare quarter-hour, one is tempted to pin one's thoughts to paper; but one's letters now are necessarily so banal that I don't know if you even take the trouble to read them. You are able to do sort of pen pictures which I enjoy but can't reciprocate. I wish I had your gift. Of course it is easier

MAY 1915

to be diffuse than terse, but my letters are generally short, not so much for lack of anything to say but for lack of anything one is allowed to say.

23rd May 1915

HERE is a copy of a letter (which I was allowed to make) believed to be absolutely genuine and received the other day by Q.M.G.:

12, SOUTH ST.,
ST. ANDREW'S,
SCOTLAND.

RESPECTED SIR, DEAR SIR,

Though I take this liberty as it leaves me at present, I beg to ask if you will let me know where my husbin though he is not my legible husbin as he has a wife though he says she is ded. but I don't think he nos for sure but we are not marryd though I am getting my allotment regler which is no fault of Mr. Loy Groegr who would stop it if he could and Mr. Mckenner, but if you no where he is as he belong to the Royal Fling Corps evere since he joined in the January when he was sacked from his work for talking

JULY 1915

back at his bos which was a woman at the laundry where he worked. I have not had any mony from him since he joined though he told Mrs. Harris what lives on the ground floor that he was going to have six shillings a day and I have three children what has been the father of them though he says it was my falt. Hoping you will write soon and quit well as it leave me.

MRS. JANE JACKSON.

11th *July* 1915

KITCHENER had one of the greatest ovations of his life – and he has had many – on his way to and from the Guildhall two days ago; he happened to look out of the window half an hour before he started and could not make out what the huge crowd was waiting for, and was genuinely surprised when told that they were waiting for him. All the route was lined with cheering people, and the reception at the Guildhall itself was tremendous; it was as if everyone were determined to show the utter trust vested in him. I believe he sent a message to the Press begging that no attempt should be made to champion him against

Northcliffe's campaign (engineered by French), but he must feel that he has been wounded in the House of a Friend. His sense of humour, however, generally prevails, and when he read the letter announcing that he had been recommended for the Garter, he muttered: 'I suppose for the future if I want anything, I have only got to get French to write me up.'

Dumayrou was telling me about Joffre when he was last over here; he says that the Generalissimo speaks very little but takes in everything that is said; he has a prodigious memory and, months later, can remember every detail of a conversation in which he has taken but little part. He never writes except to his wife, even letters to personal friends being written by members of his Staff and sometimes not even signed by himself. He is not a *croyant* but is not anti-clerical, and for special jobs often chooses officers who are devout Catholics. He is not a Freemason. Although it is less than an hour's drive, Madame Joffre – whom he adores – has never been to G.H.Q., and he only goes to see her when he is summoned to Paris for a conference. Yet before the War his life was wholly domestic; his exercise was to walk for two hours with his wife after *déjeuner*, and for his recreation, she would read the newspapers or a book to him in the evening; no theatres, no clubs, and no dinner-parties. Madame Joffre was brought up a good deal in England and speaks English fairly well; he declares he can only say a

OCTOBER 1915

few words in English, but I find Frenchmen very reluctant to speak our language if anything of an official character is at issue. Perhaps because they think that French is the correct vehicle for interchange of international views, or perhaps because they fear that an English word may not have the precise meaning that they intend to convey. Grey, who speaks French fairly well but with a firm British accent, talks English to Cambon who replies in French, and they get on capitally thus. Many more British officers, I am told, speak French fluently than French officers speak English even moderately well; but one must remember that our officers usually took up French for their foreign language, whereas the French officers have always been encouraged to take up German.

31st October 1915

JOFFRE came to the War Office twice; the first time his entrance was intended to be with some pomp and everyone was on the *qui vive* to see him, messengers ready to open the doors of S. of S.'s room *à deux battants*; unfortunately just as he was mounting the great staircase, preceded by

two officials and followed by his Staff, he was seized with a pain in his inside and had to be secluded for half an hour; when he emerged the fizz had rather gone out of the occasion and he had to be led rather tamely along the corridor. I hear the P.M. was greatly impressed by his frankness and ability to put his case which, in that voice of cream, he made a very strong one. I hear that Delcassé keeps threatening to resign and says that he is not in agreement with the Government; our Ministers may occasionally be at loggerheads but in that respect they are fools to the French. Also Prince George of Greece telegraphed to Tino that an attack on Serbia would mean war with Bulgaria, and that he and Princess Marie would return to Athens; the King answered, 'War not likely, no need for you to come back.' Joffre had to postpone his departure for a couple of hours as Queen Alexandra begged him to come and see her; the dear, gracious lady always does the right thing, even if sometimes at a rather awkward moment, but of course Joffre felt her irresistible charms and said the interview with her would have been worth a whole afternoon's delay.

8th November 1915

THE *Globe* has got itself into very warm water with a fictitious and mischievous story that Kitchener handed in the seals of office before leaving for the Near East. As a matter of fact he sent a message to Stamfordham to say he had nothing of sufficient importance to say to justify asking for an audience; the King, however, asked him to call as he particularly wanted a few words with him. The S. of S. was of course dreadfully worried and rather depressed (he has other enemies up against him beside the Germans); but happily he can switch his mind off easily and between the Palace and leaving for the station he was wholly absorbed for a quarter of an hour in the drawing of a cabinet into which to put some of his best china at Broome.

Teck is doing wonderfully well as sort of Assistant Military Secretary; Robb is a hard-headed, kind-hearted man who can work without winking for twelve hours at a stretch and knows the Army List by heart as regards names and seniority. Teck is gifted with that extraordinary memory which characterizes so many of his family and can remember exactly what there is for or against (always if possible for) any officer who comes on the *tapis*; the combination therefore works admirably. In one of the military operations-rooms where the chief duty is to deal with the telegrams

and despatch of messages, there is so much doing up of envelopes that the officers, mostly wounded, have adopted the motto: 'Serviunt etiam qui lambentes stant.' They also serve who only stand and lick.

Venizelos seems to have let himself go in the Greek Parliament and given it hot and strong to the King and Ministers. Tino of course nailed his colours to the fence from the start, but if he plays hanky-panky with the Allied troops, it will surely be regarded as an act of war. One has a sneaking sympathy for him although he is a bit of a sneak himself. He has reasons – rather curious reasons, they say – domestic as well as dynastic, for not offending the Kaiser, and his military training in Berlin (when he was *mal vu* in Greece) may well have persuaded him that Germany would win the war. So long as he remains strictly neutral I suppose we cannot put too much pressure on him, but he wants careful watching. I am told Queen Sophie says unkind things about King Edward, that his jealousy and meddling had much to do with bringing on the War, etc. etc. One cannot have much sympathy with her except that she also must be in a pretty tight place.

20th *January* 1916

To think that we shall soon now be counting our men not by the thousand but by the million, and that when the original draft for the Supplementary Estimates was made out, it was for 100,000 men; S. of S., with a stroke of the pen and without a word, altered it into 400,000. 'This is Hell with the lid off,' said Sir Charles Harris, that cautious and very deaf Financial Secretary, but no expostulation, of course, on his part availed.

Frankie Lloyd has been a blazing success as G.O.C. London District. His language is fierce, but the fierceness is so very evidently pumped up that one recognizes at once the warm heart that beats under the tightly-laced corset. Were ever virility and finickyness so strangely and happily blended? He enjoyed his two campaigns, despite a desperate wound in South Africa, more than any experience in his life. No military duty ever tired him, and sleeping out on night manoeuvres was always sheer joy. Yet one remembers how an A.D.C., who went to see him twice in his bedroom before 9 a.m., found him on the first occasion in scarlet dressing-gown with socks and slippers to match, and an hour later in the same get-up, but this time a chocolate complet. Uniform is to him a sacred matter and woe betide any young officer on leave who indulges in any departure from the

strict *tenue*, but let that same young officer be in any trouble or difficulty and he will find General Frankie the kindest and wisest of friends. — was at Broome with Lord K. when the telegram was handed to him which ran: 'Second operation now over, result even more satisfactory than the former.' That meant that the exodus from Gallipoli was complete, and the relief to S. of S. was so great that for several minutes he could not speak. He had been told originally that we should lose half our men and all our material in getting away; he saw for himself when he was out there that this was exaggerated, but he never thought we should evacuate without losing a life, and of course in so doing we have not lost prestige in the East as we should have done had we been pursued into the sea. When evacuation was decided on, S. of S. — so F. told me — refused to disclose the dates to the Cabinet and said bluntly he did not want the thing discussed at half a dozen luncheon tables. The wives of Cabinet Ministers are not always so discreet as was Mrs. Bucket in fiction and Mrs. Gladstone in fact.

M A R C H 1916

24th *February* 1916

SMITH-DORRIEN has had to resign his command in Africa owing to ill-health; I daresay he was not sorry to do so for he was in a rather false position. The expedition was engineered by Bonar Law at the Colonial Office during Kitchener's absence. When he came back he was very angry about it, said the men could not be spared, insisted on the force being cut down in numbers, and told S. D. that he would not change his status but that it would be difficult to explain why he should receive pay on a higher scale than his reduced command warranted. One is very sorry for any check to S. D. for the more one thinks, and hears, about it, the more sure one is that he saved the situation at Le Cateau. Will the French remember that, in a sense, they owe their beautiful Paris to him?

28th *March* 1916

I HEAR that S. of S. is more than usually pleased with Westminster's gallant Senussi exploit

A P R I L 1916

in releasing those unhappy prisoners. I believe that when at Mudros Maxwell had begged S. of S. to let him have some armoured cars; a battery was detached from France and Westminster, at Kitchener's suggestion, picked to command it. I must switch off now as I have been given a huge Memorandum to copy.

4th April 1916

THE Crown Prince of Serbia has made an excellent impression and pleaded his cause very well; the dinner for him at York House went off capitally, a special feature being Lloyd George who, although unable to speak a word of any foreign language, managed to keep up a quite animated conversation with the two Serbians, his neighbours at dinner, and, with only a little interpretation, talked to the Prince for half an hour afterwards; for sheer intelligence and a sort of quick sympathy, which is extremely attractive, L. G. is hard to beat.

When do you get your holiday? I think it is nearly due, and I do hope you will spend it here. I have so much to tell you of these last nine

APRIL 1916

months, which it has been impossible to write. One hears that the French Ministers are fighting one another almost as hotly and bitterly as they are fighting the Germans. Briand is supposed to be rather inclined to fondle the Greeks, and this on account of susceptibilities (very innocent ones) towards Princess Marie. Do you remember Lady de Grey tried to arrange a marriage between her and Prince Frank? So long as the politicians only squabble among themselves and don't interfere with Joffre, I don't suppose it much matters.

11th April 1916

THE £100,000 which the King has given has not been well stage-managed, and has rather fallen between two stools: either it was a *beau geste* and as such ought to have gone to military charities, or if the King wished – without shedding his prerogative – to bear the same burden as his subjects, the precise amount which he would have paid as a subject should have been calculated and handed over; in other words, a generous but business arrangement. As the matter now stands, the King has done a fine thing,

M A Y 1916

the Government scores, and nobody is really grateful.

Did the gale visit you? I hear 1,000 trees were blown down at Hatfield, over 20,000 at Holkham, and a wood laid flat at Panshanger.

I believe S. of S. has an inflexible rule he will not see any lady at the War Office. Lady C. made a bet she would get an interview with him and, there being a time limit, lost it. Haldane begged him to make an exception and see Mrs. Spender; he told Haldane that if he waived any rule it would be for him, but he could not do so as it would open the door to other petitioners, all of whom had 'very special' reasons to urge for the favour. He was at one time bombarded with feminine letters, some of them anonymous. One, I know, ran: 'Beloved Knight, I can't rest until I have found you; help me to reach you,' and so forth.

17th May 1916

S. of S. has had a little heart-to-heart talk with the Prince of Wales and begged him to stick to his Staff duties and not dash up to the trenches

JUNE 1916

on every possible occasion. I think the Prince quite accepted what was said and told Lord K. how pleased he was to have been allowed to go to Khartoum. At first the King would not consent to this as he said it would keep him too long away from his own work, but after the Prince had started for Egypt, S. of S., reinforced by a telegram from Wingate, represented how intensely valuable would be the appearance of the Sovereign's son in the Sudan, and the King quickly saw the point and agreed. The Prince sent a really excellent report home from Egypt which has been filed in the archives here.

8th *June* 1916

ONE cannot write about it, or speak about it, only think about it. One goes about one's work but with a sort of numbness, and the blow, the shock of which made one reel, seems to have fallen on everyone. It may only be a military mourning but it is a universal grief, and there is the sort of bewildered feeling that he can't really be gone. I am told that the scenes in the street when the news was first placarded were indes-

cribable; people scrambled off buses to buy the papers and caught hold of one another with the words: 'It can't be true.' One always felt somehow he inspired thousands who never set eyes on him with a sort of personal devotion which they could not explain; now one knows that this was true. He certainly lived for his Country, and he has died for her. God rest his soul – in life he certainly knew no rest – and the souls of the brave fellows who perished with him. It is curious how, when all is pain, a little thing can give an extra stab, and it did hurt that Mr. Balfour should have gone out to a dinner-party on the very night; as First Lord he was technically responsible for the disaster and there is growing talk that the Navy was guilty of neglect in letting the ship – not a very good ship – go up an unswept channel, as unswept it certainly must have been. The King at first wanted the Service at St. Paul's to be tomorrow but he was reminded that there was a chance of the body being recovered, in which case it would be a funeral, and not a memorial, Service. He willingly agreed to the delay and has also consented to drive with an escort, in khaki of course, instead of coming in a closed carriage as he originally intended. One knows that he wants to do all honour to a faithful servant.

J U L Y 1916

13th June 1916

THE Service to-day was quite beautiful, music and arrangements perfect. He did say to someone after Lord Roberts' funeral, which was a little mismanaged, that he did not want a military funeral for himself as it gave so much trouble, but one feels he would have liked this, so simple and so dignified; I will send you *The Times* account of it. Did you not like the words in *The Times* leader: 'The great armies he has raised will be his monument, and no nobler monument has been raised to man'?

8th July 1916

I BELIEVE Prince Consort, at the time of the Duke of Wellington, told the Queen that the Sovereign should not be directly concerned with any Memorial to a subject. The Queen faithfully observed this rule (though sorely tempted to set it aside in the case of Gordon) and handed it down. That is, I suppose, why the King will not be President of the Kitchener Memorial Fund,

NOVEMBER 1918

and why Queen Alexandra is to be so in his stead. The Queen Mother was greatly attached to Lord K. and when she heard he was going to Russia the day before he started, she begged the King to stop him; she had a premonition the journey would be fatal.

And now about myself; — has been very kind and has asked me whether I would like to go over to France and be attached to the — Branch. Of course at my age one can only do administrative work, but I am so glad to be going, and to be going to be more active. I am to have a fortnight's leave before starting which I shall spend quietly with my sister. France is a large place and our jobs lie far apart, but I am hoping we may be able to meet somewhere occasionally and talk *de vive voix* instead of on paper. By the bye, did you note Briand said that Lord Kitchener was 'mourned as a son of the Republic'? We who cherish his memory will like France all the better now.

27th November 1918

It is good, in many ways, to be back, and the authorities were good to release an old fogey

so soon; I am technically on leave but this is only pending my being struck off the strength. I suppose your job will also soon be up and, after you have done all the things which will be waiting for you in Paris, you must come over here and look round the old places; many of the old faces you will find much changed if they have not disappeared altogether.

The King has gone over to France for a tour of the battlefields; he had a wildly enthusiastic reception the other day when he inspected the Silver Badge men in the Park, a little too wild as the crowd broke through a thin cordon of police and he was nearly pulled off his horse by patriots who wanted to shake his hand. The carriage in which the two Queens sat was nearly upset by other enthusiasts; I fancy Queen Mary was just a little nervous (more for the King than for herself), but Queen Alexandra rather liked it and said, 'We ought to have taken the name of the *nice* man who tried to get into the carriage.'

Foch is to have a Guard of Honour drawn up on his arrival, at Charing Cross, I suppose; an unusual compliment for anyone not the Head of the State, but he is a very unusual person. I believe the Duke of Connaught will drive with him in the carriage, and there is some question whether Clemenceau ought to go in it also. I remember when the Khedive made his entry into Cairo in 1882 after Tel-el-Kebir, it was a question whether the Duke of Connaught or Lord Wolse-

ley, as Commander-in-Chief, should sit by his side, and the Queen telegraphed her desire that the Duke of Connaught, although only a Brigadier, should do so.

Derby seems to have held high the highest traditions of the British Embassy in Paris, the more credit to him as his French is very shaky, and scanty; I wish he had been a little more loyal towards Kitchener, Haig and Robertson.

20th *December* 1918

How very determined very amiable people can be. Queen Alexandra had let drop her intention of greeting Haig yesterday outside the gates of Marlborough House. A message reached her from Buckingham Palace deprecating this step and suggesting it might cause inconvenience to police and traffic; as nothing further was heard, it was supposed the message had taken effect, but as soon as it was signalled that Haig had left Charing Cross, the beloved Queen said 'I go' and, with Lady Haig and her girls in attendance, 'go' she did, and her greeting of the victorious C.-in-C., who of course stood up in the carriage to shake

hands with her, may well stand as one of the most picturesque post-War incidents. Can you imagine it? In order to belittle Haig, L.G. wanted him to come over with Foch on the 1st and drive, with Henry Wilson, in the third carriage of the Procession. The King had only to hear of the suggestion to stamp heavily on it and to insist that Haig, with his Army Commanders, should have a special reception and should be immediately received, and entertained, by the Queen and himself. Haig has won for himself, in the teeth of cruel and often unnecessary difficulties, an imperishable position; he ought to be a very happy, though he is said to be a very tired man.

Fancy the Duke of Grafton, who joined the Army the year of Queen Victoria's accession, surviving to the end of this War: as so many of the FitzRoys still bear a resemblance, which they perhaps cultivate, to the portraits of the Stuarts, one wonders why the *Dictionary of National Biography* says that the King accepted the paternity of the child he made Duke of Grafton 'after much hesitation.'

12th *January* 1919

YES, the late Michelham was a K.C.V.O. as well as a peer, but I am not sure for what precise reason he received the accolade; one does not associate him with chivalry in the heraldic sense, but the family name always recalls Lord Salisbury's 'mot' when the Wandsworth peerage marked Rosebery's resignation of office that 'the Government had gone out stern foremost.' I believe Michelham did a good deal for hospitals in the War; he boarded and lodged Lloyd George for the Conference, and hoisted the Quadriga on to the arch at Constitution Hill. Such were his claims to fame.

F. E., when of tender years, told a schoolfellow that some day he would be Lord Chancellor; the schoolfellow resented the boast with some vigour, but it has come true, and F. E. was thoughtful enough to let G. be the first person, after his immediate family, to know of his new dignity. I wonder if he will eventually lodge in the House of Lords; I do not think he will find many modern conveniences there.

Irving used to say that Bancroft and Garrick were the only actors to make fortunes on the stage (he overlooked Kendal); I expect Wyndham will leave a tidy sum, but I think he was a successful speculator under the guidance of Alfred Beit. Wyndham, besides being a charming companion,

FEBRUARY 1919

was so delightful an actor that one regretted he went on too long, especially when he cast himself for *jeune premier* parts; on the stage, as in real life, the love affairs of middle-aged and elderly men, being divested of romance, are either dirty or dull and often both.

7th February 1919

THE strikes are bad; largely the result of the heady wine of victory which was forced upon us; if only we had been told that an armistice is a sign of a country being still at war, discipline would not have been suddenly relaxed and there would have been a quiet feeling of relief and of hope for permanent peace instead of the sort of orgy of clumsy extravagance which has prevailed the last two months. Two railways 'came out' yesterday, workers have been transported in lorries, and there have been heard one or two ugly murmurs of 'No khaki.' 'No khaki' indeed; the khaki which has crushed to dust the accursed system of Prussianism which for nearly sixty years hung like a cloud over Europe. I tried to hail a bus in the Strand this morning, but they careered

down the middle of the road crammed inside and out with no thought of picking up passengers.

Snow and slush outside St. Paul's yesterday; inside a fine memorial service for the Guards; the massed bands in their scarlet made a good splash of colour and the music was well chosen; the King and Queen came up for it from Sandringham. To everyone in the congregation was given a Roll of Honour evidently got up with great care, and by stretching a point, names were included when death had occurred only as an indirect consequence of the War. It is scarcely believable, but perfectly true, that the only two names overlooked were those of the two Colonels of the Irish Guards – Lord Roberts and Lord Kitchener. One died on duty in France within sound of the guns, and the other actually at the hands of the enemy. G. asked the G.O.C. London District how this had happened; nothing to account for it except one of those extraordinary oversights from which even the most conscientious officials are not exempt. Deepest, and obviously quite sincere, regret has already been expressed.

The elaborate ceremony in the House of Lords two days ago when the Lord Chancellor knelt to the empty Throne (the King's Chair) and deposited on it his patent, was slightly marred by F. E.'s cocked hat being too small for him and inadvertently put on hind side before.

13th *February* 1919

Yes, everyone is pleased that the wedding will be in Westminster Abbey instead of the hole and corner (however gorgeous) Chapel Royal or the inconvenient St. George's, Windsor. These alternatives were for Queen Victoria's personal convenience, and when that was at stake nothing else mattered. But why at twelve-thirty as, I hear, is arranged? These Royal morning ceremonies are always put off till early afternoon. At the 1887 Jubilee the Abbey service was so late and the delays so vexatious that the luncheon at Buckingham Palace did not take place till four o'clock. I suppose beautiful Lady Patricia will anyhow take precedence of all Dukes' daughters; she may have a different rank at Court to what she will enjoy when she dines out, i.e. if she is determined to sink her 'royalty' for general purposes.

Are sermons by famous French preachers ever printed? They are generally so good to hear that some of them must be worth reading and keeping. The sermon preached by Canon Fleming the Sunday after the Duke of Clarence's death has realized nearly £2,000 before going out of print, and the money has been divided between the Gordon Boys' Home and some other excellent charity. So solid good comes out of what was rather flamboyant stuff. The sermon was entitled 'Recog-

dition in Eternity' and, as the Prince was called Albert Victor, there was some allusion to opening the Heavenly gates and letting the Victor in. No Court preacher to Louis XIV could have gone one better than that.

The Asquith-George letters don't bring out anything very new or explain clearly the, rather unedifying, process under which Lloyd George crossed from Whitehall to Downing Street and pushed Asquith out of his seat. It would seem that to the Roumanian *débâcle* was due the fall of the Asquith Ministry. It will be up to the military historian to show how far Roumania by the sacrifice of herself hindered and held up Germany and thus rendered a solid contribution to our final victory. But the odd thing is that L. G. denounced Asquith for the blundering policy which brought about the Roumanian disaster and attributed to the same blundering policy the Italian plight when he himself had been in office for nearly a year. If he could not prevent the latter, why crucify Asquith for not foreseeing and arresting the former?

How awful the shooting in cold blood of those Russian Grand-dukes! Why did Grand-duke Paul go back to Russia from France; was it, as in the case of Madame du Barri, to recover property?

10th *March* 1919

I HOPE Haig will have a comparatively easy time in the Home Command, for he looks as if he needed a rest. I believe he has registered two resolutions: (1) that he will accept no honour until anyhow justice, if not honour, has been done to the soldiers whom he led to victory; (2) that his diaries, which were typed out by Lady Haig herself, shall lie in the British Museum for a long period, and thus as regards his own doings and difficulties he will remain silent – as a gentleman should. I wonder what honour he will eventually receive: strawberry leaves are entirely merited, but I would like him to be Sir Douglas Haig, K.G., with a succession of Sir Douglas Haigs to follow. No appellation could ever be a more honoured household word. I believe he has secured from the Stationery Office the copyright of his Despatches on condition that he does not part with it. This will enable him to have the Despatches bound to his taste, enriched with maps or amplified in any way if the text is not interfered with. I hope it will be burnt into the military student that not only was Haig responsible for the finish of the War, but the armies who fought under him did so on the principles which he laid down in Field Service Regulations – the Manual which some military expert has described as a model and mirror of perfect organization.

Robertson will do well on the Rhine. Both Haig and Robertson must have sometimes found the politicians nearly as tough a proposition as the Germans.

I wonder if it is true that the Kaiser is claiming nearly 4,000,000 as his private property. I never joined in the chorus of 'Hang the Kaiser' or even believed he could be put on his trial, but if ever there was a clear case for confiscation of estates, this sticks out. Sufficient should be set aside for his decent and comfortable maintenance, the rest should go towards defraying the costs of the hideous orgy of blood for which he was so largely responsible. It would be but a drop of water in a bucket, but it is a matter of right and wrong. Personally I think all the art treasures should have been taken out of Germany and held in trust by the Allies till the War indemnity had been paid. If Germany had won I feel sure the Louvre and National Gallery would have been stripped and the pictures kept as hostages; as a matter of fact, France helped herself in the Napoleonic period, and the Duke of Wellington insisted on pictures being sent back to Spain. What would have been your first choice if you had been given a free hand to loot Germany? Mine would have been the Sistine Madonna.

I am sorry Gore is leaving Oxford; both the Diocese and the University will miss his influence. He is a saint as well as a scholar, but I do wish saintly scholars could be a little better groomed.

MARCH 1919

When someone congratulated Dr. King on the wonderful voluntary attendance of undergraduates at his Friday lectures, he said: 'Yes, but I wish the dear young fellows were not all quite such "mousey" men.'

23rd *March* 1919

A BITTER wind and a bite of snow in the air did nothing yesterday to prevent people flocking to see the March Past of the Household Troops; it took an hour and a half for the stream of men to flow past Buckingham Palace, which was the saluting point, and somehow the stream of khaki was more moving than would have been a stream of scarlet and blue and gold: the men marched in open order so everyone could see their fine physique. The Prince of Wales got a great ovation when and where he was recognized on Cavan's Staff. It was all very wonderful, and don't mind my saying it was all very English. I am sure everyone felt that one wanted to tell the men what splendid fellows they were; for the moment personal sorrow was set aside and sorrowful mothers and wives and sisters, of whom

APRIL 1919

there must have been thousands in the crowds, would see all the triumph and honour of the men no less clearly because they looked at them through a mist of tears. The first break-off was in Hyde Park and it was almost dark before the Artillery train and ambulance which brought up the rear reached their journey's end, but even then, I was told, the sightseers lingered about in quiet groups. Every man was to have a copy of the King's message in which, as Colonel-in-Chief, he told them how grateful he was for all they had done.

2nd April 1919

THE Abbey Service this morning for the Household Cavalry was a shade more beautiful even than the Service for the Brigade of Guards at St. Paul's. The combined bands of the three regiments played, and played admirably, Massenet's 'Angelus' and the Eton Memorial March, and Sullivan's anthem 'Though I walk through the Valley' was exquisitely sung. This last was, perhaps, unconsciously, a particularly happy choice, for not long before his death, Arthur

Sullivan came to the Cavalry Barracks at Windsor, visited the Band room and thanked 'the Gentlemen of the Life Guards,' as he quite correctly addressed them, for the way they always rendered his music. The Dean's short address was simple and sincere, then a few moments of silence which could be felt, broken by a note of triumph in one verse of 'Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.' Then perhaps best of all, the prayer that the souls of the men who had fallen might rest in peace, that pardon might be granted for sin, and that light perpetual might shine on their spirits. Thank God for this. To think that at the end of the South African War the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul's yielded to the protest of a handful of highborn Protestant Dames and struck out the Kontakion from the Memorial Service. Lastly, high up in the Triforium over the East End, the trumpeters sounded – as only Household Cavalry trumpeters can sound – the Last Post, and the three regimental calls, from the West End came the Réveillé, and before its echoes had faded, a thunder of drums led up to the crashing of bands, and a general outburst of voices in the National Anthem. A combined ecclesiastical and military effort always issues in a perfectly organized and executed ceremonial, and I would challenge any country to surpass – or rival – this one. Everyone was so glad that Queen Alexandra came with the King and Queen: she has always been a special and a

APRIL 1919

constant friend to the Household Cavalry: she was one of the very last to whom Harry Crichton spoke in England, as she came to see the Blues just before they marched to the station. Did you know that the Household Cavalry Standards were by the King's consent, or rather at his suggestion, lodged in Buckingham Palace while the Regiments were in France? This is a one-subject letter: somehow I cannot write, or think, of anything else to-day.

12th *April* 1919

How many Juliets, including Melba, Patti, etc., have we seen? Doris Keane is far too sophisticated and transatlantic for my notion of an Italian damsel, and she is supposed to have declined the many useful and happy notions affecting the part which Ellen Terry tried to instil into her. Ellen herself delightful as the Nurse, but I ask again and again, without ever getting a satisfactory answer, why the Nurse should be represented as a rather decrepit old woman; according to the text she should be about twenty-five years older than Juliet, and even a

hot climate cannot make a woman of thirty-nine into a septuagenarian. The Romeo was on a par with the Juliet. One of the very few unhappy remarks credited to King Edward was when Irving told him that he was going to do Romeo and Juliet. 'That ought to be excellent,' said Albert Edward, who greatly admired Irving. 'Who will play Romeo?' Leo Quartermain's diction is wonderful and never could Queen Mab be better treated.

By the bye, get *Dere Mabel*, only 2s. 6d. and gives a good idea of American war humour. The American soldier explains to his Mabel that 'camouflage is the same as putting powder on your face instead of washing it, you deceive Germans with it.' Georges Prades told me that the word 'camouflage' is derived from the name of a 'stage-hand.' In Molière's time there were two functionaries, the *souffleur* – the prompter – and the *camoufleur*, who at the end of the play covered up the stage furniture with cloths. He also told me – but as to this I am more sceptical – that the homely diaper, so useful to infants, is a corruption of *drap d'Ypres*.

APRIL 1919

15th April 1919

SHALL I send you Haig's despatches? you ought to read the book carefully; it will equip you to answer many questions which may hereafter be put to you in Paris, and enable you to deal with any adverse comments to which you may be treated by your French friends. These possibly may not agree with Haig's dictum that 'the margin by which the German onrush was stemmed in 1914 was so narrow and the subsequent struggle so severe that the word miraculous is hardly too strong a term to describe the recovery and ultimate victory of the Allies.' Joffre is perhaps disposed to attribute anyhow the 'recovery' to his strategy rather than to any Providential intervention.

The Prince of Wales is to be initiated next month into Freemasonry at the Household Brigade Lodge. The King has always said that he had too much to do to be concerned with the Craft, but King Edward was very keen on it, and very particular and knowledgeable about the ritual. He once met Ponsonby coming out of his room at the Palace wearing a white waistcoat, and on hearing that he was on the way to a Household Brigade Lodge, he told him to go back, change his waistcoat, and inform the Brethren it was his wish as Patron they should always wear black waistcoats in Lodge. I believe

M A Y 1919

the original idea of this was to make as little distinction as possible between members in evening clothes and those who, for some reason, had not evening clothes to wear.

May-day 1919

I CAN'T remember; did the Opera in Paris close during the War? Here we make a fresh start next week and Puccini has three one-act operas on the bill. Did you ever hear the genesis of *Madam Butterfly*? The play was written in a great hurry by Long and Belasco to help out a 'flop' in a New York theatre; there was a contemporary 'flop' in a theatre here, and the manager cabled to America and received permission to put on *Butterfly* for the same purpose. Puccini happened – really only happened – to be present at the first performance in London, and was so struck with the story that he then and there decided to make an opera of it. I believe Belasco and Long were much reproached for making the American naval officer desert his lady love.

MAY 1919

3rd May 1919

Yes, Mrs. Freeman at £15,000 is a record price for a Reynolds. For old sake's sake I had a good look at Lady Bampfylde in the National Gallery and came away with the uncomfortable impression that – anyhow for an inexpert like myself – the copies which Alfred Rothschild had made for Lord Poltimore and Lord Kitchener are quite uncannily good.

How uninformed criticism can be! More than one reviewer of 1914 – a volume as inaccurate as it is obviously jaundiced – says that Kitchener, when he hurried to France to arrest French's retreat, ought to have gone to the Commander-in-Chief and not told the Commander-in-Chief to come to him. I thought most people knew by now that K. of K. asked French to choose where they should meet, and the Embassy in Paris was French's own choice.

West Dean has been let again, but I can't remember to whom: the Chilian Minister was a very good tenant, just as Chili is considered to be a very honest Republic. When Willie James bought West Dean he sent down an agent with the due deposit money, about £100,000 in the form of Coutts' cheque drawn on the Bank of England. The cheque was refused, cash, according to some antediluvian custom, being insisted on as the only tender. Unfortunately the day was

JULY 1919

Maundy Thursday and five days must elapse before the money could be taken down; the vendor charged interest at the rate of 5 per cent. on the sum – about £70. What would Portia have said to this?

19th July 1919

YOUR *Times* newspaper (N.B. ‘newspaper’) will give you a much better account than I can of the Victory March which closes the most important chapter in the history of Europe; he would be a dullard indeed whose blood did not tingle this morning. Our sailors have kept the mastery of the sea, and our soldiers have won the mastery of the land; and they all seem to look upon it as their simple duty done, with no thought of the heroism which thousands of them displayed. It was very good to-day, and I think best of all the King’s message to the wounded which will linger in one’s ears when the shouting and the tumult die away. Foch had a great ovation. G. went to see him about half-past six and expected to find him up to his eyes, instead of which Foch calmly said: *‘Je n’ai rien à faire, vous allez rester*

jusqu'à l'heure du dîner.' Why is it really big men are never 'rushed'? Perhaps because, although they never hustle, they never loiter, and stick to their own job and know how to delegate details.

The *maître d'hôtel* brought a message to know if the band might play the 'Marseillaise,' and Foch answered, 'Whether I say "yes" or "no," they are sure to play it, so I may as well say "yes."' He also said: 'Three great figures were missing to-day: King Edward, who forged the Entente; Lord Roberts, who told his Country to be prepared; and Lord Kitchener, the organizer of victory.'

Lady Helena Cambridge's fiancé was reckoned before the War as one of the Guardsmen who took their calling very seriously: cruel luck for him that he was taken prisoner before the War was two months old and kept in durance vile till the middle of 1918. I believe the 'War Workers' Garden Party at the Palace is to be an enormous affair as regards numbers, but no party can crowd that huge garden unless the guests huddle together to gaze at the Royalties. I don't suppose the war workers will be worse in this respect (they very likely will be better) than the people at the Court function, a function, by the way, which I was always to speak of as a 'breakfast.'

JULY 1919

20th July 1919

OF course you have read *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*: the story in itself is very fine, the French and German sons and daughters-in-law are admirably contrasted and not exaggerated and the book will indelibly burn into innumerable memories the savagery of German methods of waging war. And I think you may well shed a tear over the last pages and not be ashamed of it.

The Nettlefolds are very worthy and very wealthy Birmingham folk; as supporters of the drama they are entitled to all praise, but how could they publicly present themselves as Pygmalion and Galatea, and evoke memories of the beauty of Julia Neilson and Mary Anderson and the consummate art of Mrs. Kendal? I suppose it is British lack of imagination which is responsible for these blunders: no such thing could occur in any other capital of Europe.

Very, very glad your victory march was so successful; triumph and pathos blended, and glad Poincaré had a good reception. He is hard, but clear as crystal and clean as a nut.

1st August 1919

I HEAR the King insisted on Wingate being present when he received the Sudanese notabilities the other day. Wingate interpreted the long Arabic address as no one else could have done; his Arabic is as fluent as it is scholarly. The F.O. of course have a 'down' on him because he foretold rightly what would happen in Egypt unless certain things were done, and gave wise advice which the S. of S. declined to follow but which proved to be perfectly sound.

The F.O. made another muddle; they somehow mistook the Sudanese notabilities for Sudanese soldiers and sent them into camp at Windsor. Wingate, who had offered to look after them and whose offer was turned down, heard of this late at night and could only telephone down to beg that the notables – who are really distinguished people – should be well covered up with blankets; he reported the matter to Buckingham Palace the next morning, and the King, who was naturally very angry about the misunderstanding, did everything that was gracious to make amends.

Foch surely is the first 'foreigner' since Blücher to receive the bâton; the King conceived a strong liking for him when they first met at the manœuvres of 1912 and took every opportunity of seeing him during the War, so the gift had a personal touch as well as a military character.

AUGUST 1919

15th August 1919

THE Lord Chancellor has been richly and rightly thanked by the Army Council for his work in revising courts martial; he has been doing this since early 1916, i.e. under five Secretaries of State, and he is so fine a lawyer that his judgment has been unerring throughout, and one is sure that in every case the offender has got the full benefit of any doubt or of earlier good service. F. E.'s grasp of a subject is so swift as well as so sure that he could probably deal, and deal correctly, with a dozen cases where others of his colleagues would be brought up short by the difficulties of one. It is a grim and gruesome thought, but one wonders in which of the three chief belligerent countries (America was so belated one does not count her) the larger number of soldiers suffered the extreme penalty. No woman spy was shot here though I believe at least one was handed over to the French and practically doomed before doing so.

30th August 1919

TRULY the War Office moves in a mysterious way; with demobilization nine months old, nearly 200 women are being trained at the public expense as chauffeuses, though whom they are to drive when their training is finished, no one knows. Two specially competent lady drivers at the W.O. during the War went by the nicknames — which they altogether belied — of Skidding Jenny and Side-Slip Susan. Being wholly inexpert as a mechanic, as a mere male I always felt so shy if something happened to the car and the lady driver had to do the necessary slight repairs; one could only offer to lie under the car to give an appearance of helping. Did you ever hear the name of the young chauffeuse who was reproached by Pershing for being a quarter of an hour late. '*Et vous, mon Général, vous avez dix huit mois de retard; montez vite.*'

As usual, I have entirely enjoyed my August in London. Personally I should always like to leave London on May Day and be settled back just before the Bank Holiday.

Mr. L——, as a Birthday knight, has been the object of comment; one paper suggested that an honour of this kind might be appropriate to Lloyd George's, but not to King George's birthday.

You who know Russia so well must be revelling

SEPTEMBER 1919

in Yashka. What a woman, what an Amazon! Joan of Arc pales beside her. If only she could have been a feminine Napoleon when the Revolution broke out, the Germans might have been swept from the country. She would have concentrated where Kerensky dissipated.

7th September 1919

THE heat is intense; to think is to perspire and to write is to mop oneself. Will the buses and trams come out? If so, business will be paralysed. The fish, of which huge stocks are held up in Aberdeen, will come by trawler; the bread will be all right, and if only there are sufficient supplies of milk for the children, it may be a mere matter of inconvenience and not of privation, and it may mean good-bye to Geddes, which will be a silver lining to the cloud. I walked across the Park this morning with my permit, and my little terrier Nelly, and we seemed to be the only male and female not on duty.

Sir Edward Grey is very anxious about his eyes, the more so on account of all he has to read in view of his visit to America. He was a

OCTOBER 1919

good friend to France, and there must be many Frenchmen who will sympathize with him. I fear that from time to time he has a little stab of self-reproach. Had he said straight out that if Germany invaded Belgium she must reckon with us, might the War have been averted? But could he have said it without thereupon resigning, and if he had resigned, France would have lost her advocate. One wonders whether King Edward, in his love for France, might have insisted on answering Poincaré's letter and King Albert's appeal in more go-ahead terms. But all this is pure speculation.

8th *October* 1919

I WONDER if the King and Queen enjoyed the motor 'run' from Balmoral to London. They slept the night at Lowther and had luncheon at Welbeck yesterday, when they did over 300 miles within 12 hours. The young Princes came by sea from Aberdeen. The Railway 'strikers' are said to be volunteering – with tongue in cheek – for transport work, so they would get the best of two things.

I was sorely disappointed in George Russell's *Father Stanton*; of course he could not write other than good 'stylish' prose, but he has missed an opportunity, to which, however, perhaps only a writer, half saint, half genius, could have risen – a sort of Fra Angelico of the pen. I suppose no one quite understood Stanton. I don't think he ever took the trouble to understand himself, but only cared that God should understand that he was doing his bit. He was inhibited from preaching by Bishop after Bishop. He was prevented from continuing a mission in a garrison town because the verger of the Church where he preached said he had 'ketched' two soldiers going to confession. No living was ever offered to him except one in Chicago, but *omnia vincit amor*, and when he died, thousands of men uncovered, and women knelt down, to watch the progress of crucifix and coffin from Holborn to Waterloo Bridge. I believe he wanted his epitaph to be 'God hath made of one blood all the nations of men.' I am so glad he was spared the War. His courage might have remained undaunted, but I am sure his heart would have broken. I only read the book the other day, as I was away when it came out. I believe George Russell has left very little, and one always thought of him as so comfortably off and making a snug income with his pen. He has left a good many staunch friends, and these would have been more but for his inability to refrain from saying a smart thing at

NOVEMBER 1919

their expense. *Talis ab incepto*: one remembers him at Oxford.

6th November 1919

YES, Panouse is a K.C.M.G. and richly deserved it. The Michael and George has always been the more distinctive military title; I am not sure if it has not been a little cheapened by the distribution to American officers who, however gallant, did not bear the burden and heat of the day. Canadians would of course have received it deservedly and in plenty but for the Dominion Parliament having vetoed the acceptance of titles.

L. G. must have full marks for his new appointment. I say this, not only, and not even so much because Frere is an Anglo-Catholic as because he is a profound scholar and theologian, and such is sadly needed on the Episcopal Bench. He is the first member of a monastic community to be seated there since the Reformation, an upheaval which I heard a preacher say the other day was after all engineered by a Boche.

The Queen was determined to inspect her 18th Hussars at Hounslow before their departure

DECEMBER 1919

for India; she wanted very much to go down and see them at Salisbury, I think, before they went over to France in 1914, but was begged not to do so as Lord Kitchener disliked anything getting into the paper which suggested that a regiment was going to cross the water.

28th *December* 1919

THANKS for good wishes and Paris gossip, but oh, what a hideous *réveillon*! One wonders if accounts of these things reach heathen countries and handicap Christian missionaries. How can we cast reproach on heathen rites when in a professedly Christian community the hour in which the Mother was in travail with the Messiah is celebrated by the orgy you describe. I don't suppose H. exaggerated what he saw and heard and was compelled to eat and drink, and not the least of the outrages was introducing the name of Foch — who was probably preparing for his Xmas communion — into so odious a scene.

Did you get a glimpse of the Empress when she was in Paris the other day? They say that nowadays no one is old; you are either young,

middle-aged or 'wonderful,' and certainly the last epithet can be applied to the Empress. She was not in the first blush of youth when she came to Paris and met the Emperor's first advances with '*le chemin à ma chambre à coucher est par une église bien allumée.*'

If Mr. — asks you again, say the — case was simply that the officer was removed from his command and denied promotion because he had been badly reported on by the Brigadier, Howard Vyse; the further unsatisfactory point is that shortly after Howard Vyse was himself the subject of adverse comments from the lips of his superiors. One thinks some unhappy double blunder must have occurred. I hear the Indian Cavalry officer had been found first rate, and Howard Vyse has always treated his profession very seriously; he has a fine brain and was so highly thought of that he was taken from the Blues at the beginning of the War and given a Brigade Majorship, where I know for a fact that he earned special praise for specially good work.

Meanwhile, our Winston has a real *embarras de richesses* with 4,000 surplus regular officers who don't want to go, and 3,000 non-regular officers who plead that their meritorious war services entitle them to commissions in the regular army.

10th January 1920

OF course, L. G. has *les qualités de ses défauts*, and lack of human kindness is not one of the charges to be laid to his door. And he has been very kind – within the limits of the law – about Queen Alexandra's taxation which he was able to adjust. The beloved Lady is so *dépensière*, but always for others. She cannot resist giving. Not long before King Edward died, she sent down to her secretary one of the many begging letters she daily received with 'Give £10' pencilled on it. Inquiries were made, and it was represented to the Queen that the man was not only unsatisfactory but actually in prison at the moment. 'Poor man,' was the reply, 'he will want the £10 when he comes out.'

A great fluttering in the dovecots over Keynes' *Economic Consequences of the War*. L. G.'s toothsome morsels as to 'trying the Kaiser' and extracting 24,000 millions from Germany have by now melted in our mouths and not left a very pleasant flavour: I think he admitted, as regards the cash, that the Treasury did not agree with him but stated that a Finance Committee who had dived into the question on his behalf endorsed this view. I don't think the names of the Committee have transpired. How curious that so shrewd a lawyer should be so susceptible to advice, but I suppose it is only the advice which

he seeks himself. Someone said at the end of the War that England would be run by L. G. and the man he had last spoken to.

We look like being a trifle 'over-Shakespeare'd'; the Old Vic has a steady pull on him. Moscovitch – with a Miss Grey as a rather portly Portia – is more than filling the Court, while Martin Harvey – whom Moscovitch could put in his pocket and walk away with – is trying to fill some parts of Covent Garden with a tiny Hamlet. Ainley is going to produce *Julius Cæsar*, the cosmopolitan impresario, Gilbert Miller, reposing all faith in him. And an early revival of *The Dream* is threatened, or I should say, foretold. The Prince of Wales – whom his aunts adore – has irreverently but delightfully alluded to Kensington Palace as the 'Ant heap.' What a happy thing for him that he was just old enough to be in the War, and mostly at the front, almost from the beginning and certainly to the bitter end. There could be no better apprenticeship to the Throne or passport to popularity among his countrymen. He will get a huge welcome in Australia. Here he becomes more and more every day a popular idol.

Everyone is glad that Putty¹ is to wield the Black Rod; he is as good a fellow as he is a soldier. French wanted him to have an Army Command in '15; Kitchener raised no objection, the King was favourably disposed, but the Cabinet would not agree.

¹ Sir William Pulteney.

20th February 1920

TELL me all you know or can find out about Deschanel; will Poincaré resume his practice in the Law Courts or go in for literature, or continue in politics, or contrive all three? He is such a desperately hard worker, he might be able to manage them. I suppose he is the only person who can be said to have remained in the saddle which he already occupied from end to end of the War: and how uprightly he has sat in it.

I never spent money better on a theatre ticket than when two days ago I helped the Middlesex Hospital and yelped with laughter for two hours over Gertrude Jennings' *Young Person in Pink*. A son of John Clayton – the only really good Henry Beauclerc in *Diplomacy* – was Jack among the Jills; Lady Tree as a husband-snatcher, and Miss Sydney Fairbrother as a genteel but slightly intoxicated caretaker and old clo' vendor, will stick in memory. Jean Cadell proved that a part can be made to 'stand out,' however short. Did not old Blanche Pierson, with only 15 lines, shine right through *Elevation*?

I fancy Lord Methuen is greatly distressed at having to sell some of his famous silver, especially the famous fifteenth-century Cup, but *que voulez-vous*? Soldiering is an honourable but not a profitable profession, and landed property is apt to land the owner in 'Short Street.' What Wolseley

MARCH 1920

did for the Army in general, Methuen did for the Guards in particular, and the Army and the Guards have good reason to be grateful to both of them.

If Mrs. Leeds has to finance the 'country of her adoption' she will have to tighten her purse strings as regards people like — who have lived so long on un-voluntary contributions. Queen Olga can truly claim to be maternally international, as she derives her daughters-in-law from Germany, Russia, England and 'the States.'

6th March 1920

VON DONOP has been urged to write something about the supply of munitions in the War, but he says that the outputs of Sir John French and Repington suffice to prevent his doing anything of the sort. I believe that Kitchener's last word to the Chief of the Staff was that, during his absence, Von Donop must be protected against political persecution; — another sign that he had a presentiment that he wouldn't come back. V. D. may have been a trifle slow but he was very sure. I think I told you that in September

1914 a French General came over to discuss high explosives and produced the design of a shell which to all the experts seemed to possess every merit; Von Donop alone disagreed and said that it was unsafe. The French adopted the shell and a few months later 800 of their guns burst and Joffre had to postpone a big attack. I believe Kitchener said to the Prime Minister that but for V. D. the two of them would have been hung on the gallows of public opinion.

I should not be surprised if one of Derby's claims to success in Paris – and his success is beyond doubt – is to be found in the gold plate to which his more important guests are treated and with which they must be dazzled. Does anyone other than La Très Haute Finance have a service of gold plate in Paris? I suppose for gold in this matter one can read silver gilt. I believe the Chalice at Clare College, Cambridge, is of pure gold, and so soft that the priest cannot touch it otherwise than by the stem.

A propos of chalices, did you ever hear this story which I know to be true? When Castelnau's second son was killed, he received the news at a meeting of his subordinate Generals, which he did not break off except to send a message to ask his Chaplain to break the news to his wife. Madame de Castelnau went to Mass, and made her communion almost daily; on this occasion as the priest gave her the Host she saw his hand

MARCH 1920

tremble and she just whispered: "Lequel?" And he whispered back to her the name.

One of Castelnau's A.D.C.'s for some time was a priest, who said Mass daily for him, until he went to regimental duty in the firing line. How often great military qualities are combined with piety. Eugene, Malborough, despite his haughtiness, Wolseley and Gordon occur to one.

10th March 1920

OF the five godparents who 'stood' for the Carisbrooke baby, three were represented by nominees. In such cases, who is ultimately responsible – if the responsibility enjoined in the Prayer Book is not sheer farce – for the religious upbringing of the child, the sponsor or the person who 'stood'? I am not bigoted, but I never can see how a Jew – or a non-believer – can comfortably accept the office of godparent to a Christian infant, even though they offer a very comforting cup or christening mug.

Who remembers that to-day is the anniversary of the wedding of King Edward and Queen Alexandra? How many are left who were bidden

to the annual wedding-day balls at Marlborough House?

Monro has already been asked to make way for Rawlinson but is going to sit tight; of course an Indian Army Officer ought to be the next appointment and Birdwood his first choice, but I believe Winston will ask 'Birdie' to stand aside for 'Rawly' on the understanding that this will not interfere with the next succession to the post.

So Carpentier is going to be married; what is the secret of his extraordinary, if not extravagant, success? Is it because he is young, good-looking, and graceful in word and gesture, or because he fought finely in the War and thought nothing of his art while the War was on, or because he can hit harder than any other man? Or is it a combination of all three?

Augustus John's portraits are indeed *hors ligne* and his colour schemes startling; he can treat equally well Robert Cecil – who as portrayed somehow seems a little unearthly in his unmistakable goodness – and an incognita in a soft pink nightie whose coal-black eyes and flame-coloured hair suggest a good deal of the diabolical. But best of all are the Canadian soldiers – life-like to a point which tugs at one's heart strings as one looks at them. The picture of Emir Feisal is very fine and some people have a good word for Bernard Shaw who himself looked bored, and the look of whom bored me; give me the Canadian soldiers every time.

1st April 1920

I AM a good Tory, but I rather hope Runciman will get in at Edinburgh. He is so straight and so clear-headed that he is a national asset. I believe Lord Kitchener used to say that in the 1914 Cabinet he was the one Minister who never spoke unless he was master of the subject, and was therefore always worth listening to; the same could hardly be said of several of the others.

No, I don't like the statue of Edith Cavell, but I know nothing of sculpture; somebody (H. H. I think) said it looks as if it had been executed by Euclid. By the bye, I only heard the other day of H. H., going to hear *Lohengrin* in New York with an opulent but uncultivated lady who kept up a little fire of remarks during the music; at the end she begged him to come to her box a night or two later for *Carmen*. He thanked her and said it would be a great pleasure, adding, 'I don't think I have ever heard you in *Carmen*.'

18th April 1920

PAVLOVA had a real ovation at Drury Lane. Could anyone have just seen Taglioni in his infant days and just see Anna to-day? How would they be compared? I think hereafter Pavlova will be judged less by her flying feet and her unrivalled technique than by the temperament which inspires her. She is not a dancer, she is the soul of dancing. And the audience may well have put a little extra fever into their applause because the Diva has produced a *corps de ballet*—and a remarkably good one—nearly all of British birth. With the ugly figure of unemployment stalking about, this was no mean thing to do. I thought I saw Genée in the audience; if so, I know she would be the most generous as well as the most expert of critics. How she used to *skim* across the stage of the Empire, and in a riding habit! I suppose some of Napoleon's Marshals were born in modest circumstances, but Robertson is surely the first British officer to begin by being a trooper and end (deservedly) by being a Field-Marshal. I do wish the King had taken the opportunity of the War to give social precedence to Field-M Marshals (and Admirals of the Fleet) if not to their wives. In France M. le Maréchal, I think, 'goes in' after the ex-Prime Ministers; here he may 'go in' after the youngest son of the newest Peer. I am so

M A Y 1920

looking forward to my week in Paris, my first full week it will be since 1914. I suppose much of the pre-War bloom is off everything.

20th *May* 1920

THANKS muchly to you. I enjoyed every hour of my week in Paris, though the friends of one's 'good time are gone.'

Hanbury-Williams is to succeed Ormathwaite as Master of the Ceremonies, and nobody could look, or will play, the part better; I believe his courtesy in South Africa did much to counteract Milner's lack of sympathy. His reports from Russia in the War were rather too rosy, and I think Kitchener relied rather on confirmation derived from a cavalry officer who was sent out on a special mission and who had learnt Russian at the instigation of Haig. His views were certainly uppermost in Lord K's mind when he told Joffre at Chantilly in 1915 that whereas the Maréchal was calculating on Russia standing up till the end of the War, he was pretty sure Russia would be out before a year was over. Is the Chef de Protocol in Paris the precise counterpart of

Master of Ceremonies here? I think C. de P. functions at the Quai d'Orsay itself.

The names of the London financier and Liverpool ship-owner who are said to have bought Devonshire House are not yet disclosed.

What a jolly time the Prince is getting in Australia; he certainly has 'a way with him,' and is a war hero to boot.

By the bye, here is something which rather puzzles me. Roughly speaking, over two million British were in a limited area of France for over three years; apart from contracts, billeting, regimental purchases, etc., each of these (officers or men) spent, and often chucked away, at least one franc a day. Therefore 216,000,000 francs were raked in by a limited number of peasants and *petits bourgeois*: what did they do with the money? Of course, with the deterioration of the franc, its value – if they kept it in stocking or money box – has lessened, but even so, it seems a vast sum, and had it happened here our Chancellor of the Exchequer would have made some searching inquiries. Try to enlighten me.

P.S. I think Marshal of the Corps Diplomatique is the correct title of the functionary here.

1st July 1920

SMILLIE is very 'tarsome', but I have sympathy with him if the story be true that he was once turned out of his home because he could not pay the rent, and his wife, who was in a delicate situation, suffered acutely, if she did not actually die. Just so, one remembers that the miners inherited, if they themselves did not suffer, terrible grievances; their fathers and grandfathers toiled under hideous conditions that the noble coal-owners might enjoy: of course all this is changed, but bitter memories die hard.

For a brighter subject; have you seen Madame de Pourtalès lately? I hear with her it is not a matter of *beaux restes* but that she is almost as beautiful as ever. As the Pourtalès are all Swiss Protestants, how came one to be German Ambassador in St. Petersburg in 1914?

It was Lady Holland who told me she had seen every beauty in every capital of Europe and the only one absolutely faultless from the crown of her head to the sole of her foot was Madame Castiglione. When she came over here she certainly quite cut out the (then) Duchess of Manchester and Lady Mary Craven, who were then at their best; she was so fearfully conceited and thought of nothing but attracting general admiration that she did not get on: C. tried to get up a flirtation with her, but she wasn't taking any.

JULY 1920

Portland and Newcastle who spend their money nobly on their country estates must find their mouths watering when they hear of Howard de Walden selling a slice of Marylebone property for about half a million. I forget how this land passed from Pelham-Holles to Bentincks, but it was lost to the Duchy of Portland through the will of the 5th Duke who bequeathed it to his sister. Portland is, of course, still very rich, Newcastle, I fancy, rather the reverse, but both are of the nearly exploded type of *grands seigneurs* who never mention money except to their bankers and lawyers.

I dined last night with the F.s and could not entice my neighbour from herself, her children, her chef, her cars, her clothes, her ailments. I groaned inwardly and tried to remember who said that Lord John Russell would be better company if he had any other subject than the 1688 Rebellion and himself.

JULY 1920

3rd July 1920

THE Anglo-Catholic Congress was a glorious success, and the Albert Hall was packed from floor to ceiling with eager, and for the most part perspiring, men and women. I have seldom seen the place so full except for a boxing match, and I wondered to myself which of the two occasions the Prince Consort would have disliked the most. On the last night women stripped off their jewellery and poured trinkets of more or less value into the collection plates which were piled up at the foot of the huge Crucifix. (This again would have made Prince Albert shudder as much as a 'knock out.') I believe over £40,000 was accumulated, money is still coming in, and, *Laus Deo*, practically the whole amount will go to Foreign Missions. The strict Evangelical might disapprove the means, but he would surely approve the end.

We remember Ben Davies in *Dorothy* in 1886; apparently he sang – really sang – excellently well at the Handel Festival. I say 'really sang' because in my youth I used to stand at Promenade Concerts when Sims Reeves was billed: he opened his mouth, and one admired his method, but although he was applauded to the echo, one *heard* very little.

The position in Ireland grows worse every day.

JULY 1920

24th *July* 1920

WHO was the bright Minister to suggest the first of August as the right moment to increase railway fares, and who were the evil spirits to make the sinister suggestion that the thing was planned by the Government to help the railway companies? The poor P.M. will have many blunders to answer for when a term is set to his office, but this cannot be charged to him, as he was away when this mess was made.

Bishops, reeking of the Lambeth Conference, were rampant at the Buckingham Palace Garden Party; the refreshments were 'so-so,' the rain was annoying, the music was excellent, and those who even got a glimpse of the King and Queen felt supremely happy; all the more because there was a latent, and perhaps accurate, feeling that the Queen would have liked to speak to everybody, only even royal flesh and blood have their limitations.

A steady rain of O.B.E.'s has set in, but anyhow every recipient – Knight, Dame, Commander, Officer, or simply Member – has done something for the country, even if at the same time they have done much for themselves. I never can remember what the violet ribbon in France betokens; something municipal, I think. Labby alluded to it as an Order which one seldom meets in a first-class carriage.

SEPTEMBER 1920

I always say that I grudge all the days I spend in London in July and grudge all that I spend out of London in August. But I have just arranged to go on the 4th with my sister to the Engadine for three weeks; we go straight through, but I shall stay in Paris on the way home.

20th *September* 1920

I WENT to luncheon yesterday with the titular Archbishop of Petrograd who is over here trying to recover some of the spiritual possessions of which his diocese has been robbed. The Foreign Office is very sympathetic, but I expect it is very difficult to do much for him, as one might as well tickle the hide of a rhinoceros with a cane as use diplomatic arguments to the Soviet. The Archbishop (he is a Roman Catholic, not Orthodox Church) told a rather sleepy taxi driver very early on Sunday to take him to the Catholic Cathedral, meaning Westminster. The man took him to St. Paul's where he tried to find the sacristy; eventually he explained to one of the vergers that he wanted to vest and say a Mass. The man replied:

NOVEMBER 1920

'Oh, but you can say it here.' Shades of Martin Luther!

11th *November* 1920

THE arrangements this morning were perfect, all credit is due to George Curzon who had a Cabinet Committee and some officials from the Office of Works under him. The King was the Chief Mourner, so to speak, for the nation. Four Queens were at one of the Home Office windows, opposite the Cenotaph, and one was sure that Queen Alexandra's tender heart throbbed for every woman whose heart had been broken in the War. The Queens of Spain and Norway, as the wives of neutral sovereigns, with perfect correctitude never once came to this country while the War lasted, although they must have been longing to do so. I believe, and think, King George will keep up Armistice Day. His message to the troops ran, 'Soldiers of the British Empire, with your allied comrades, you have won the war.'

Nothing could have been better, but, anyhow until this generation has passed, we must remember, and salute, the men who not only finely

NOVEMBER 1920

fought but finely fell, who in those awful months of 1918 literally threw their bodies between England and England's destruction.

God rest them well, the rest they richly deserve, and from which only the Great Captain may rouse them.

24th *November* 1920

MRS. ASQUITH's book will of course sell like hot cakes; the authoress has a fluent pen and a fertile brain and perhaps draws occasionally from the pool of her imagination rather than from the wells of truth. Her 'sending for' the War Secretary and Lord Salisbury's call on her in Cavendish Square after he was dead were harmless freaks of an elderly lady's memory, but the allusion to R. L. Stevenson and his wife with their sheets covered with hæmorrhage, ink and cold gravy is as nasty as it is probably apocryphal.

What has become of the profits of the E. F. Canteens, which are supposed to have topped 10,000,000? Will the balance in hand be administered by the Army Council or the United Services Fund? I shrewdly guess which the soldier and his family would prefer. Never did L. G. give

NOVEMBER 1920

happier advice than when he asked the King, who was more than willing, to put Byng in charge of the U.S.F. I am told that although Byng emerged from the war apparently without a bruise, the strain on him has told considerably: and I should think this can be said of many, many more.

Read the *Private Letters of Sir Robert Peel*; I can send you the book on loan if you like. There is a wonderful sentence in one of his letters in which he alludes to civilization dooming millions of human beings to sufferings as difficult to remedy as they are undeserved. For civilization read Kultur and Sir Robert is sadly up to date.

I have not yet been to see the portraits at the Grafton Gallery, but I hear the Sargent makes fools of most of the others and that there is a good – if rather flamboyant – picture of Lady Lavery by one Birley – who, I fancy, distinguished himself in the War.

I have a snuffling, sneezing, yet stuffy cold: I am not afraid of giving it to others because everyone seems to have the same.

12th December 1920

'JOINT memoranda' generally means a compromise, and the one drafted by the Milner Mission and the Egyptian Delegation is no exception. I believe compromise is defined as 'partial surrender of one's position for the sake of coming to terms'; our partial surrender here may make Queen Victoria uneasy even in her grave. 'The Egyptians cannot govern themselves,' she told Lord Granville in 1883. Anyhow our soldiers will stay on, if not to keep order, anyhow to strengthen the links in the chain of our defences East and West. I dare not think how Lord Kitchener would view the Report, but so long as the Sudan is safe in our hands, he would not be wholly unhappy. He once, I think, criticized the body of Gordon College Students as not being black enough: it was the lads of Kordofan, not of Cairo, he wanted to benefit.

These were Owen Seaman's lines about which you were asking me. They appeared in *Punch* the week after the *Hampshire* sank:

'Great was your life, and great the end you made.
As through the plunging seas that 'whelmed your
head
Your spirit passed, unconquered, unafraid,
To join the hero dead.'

I am sure Lord Kitchener will grow and grow in

stature as he recedes further and further into History. Haig put on record, in his preface to the *Life*, that but for Kitchener and his work, Germany must have won the War. Joffre, I know, says that had Kitchener not started at once to create the New Armies they would not have been in time to relieve the French at Verdun, and that but for this relief Verdun could not have held out, and with Verdun gone the War was almost surely lost. So that is double expert testimony.

18th December 1920

HAVE you heard any comments about Fleury's *Empress Eugénie*? It seems to me rather a 'messy' book, but I am glad he stamps on the silly story of her having said of the 1870 campaign: 'This is my war.' One thing is certain; no writer – however envenomed – will ever be able to cast the shadow of a shade on Eugénie's conjugal fidelity. Some of her ladies were alleged to be as frail as they were fair, and several of her gentlemen were notorious for their gallantries, but she remained a mirror of virtue and one never even heard of a Chastelard daring to make any advance to her.

Besides the Duchesse de Mouchy, who are the survivors of her friends? I think Mrs. Standish only came to know her well here in England. Was Madame de Sagan ever intimate? If so, it could only have been in the latter years of the Tuileries.

Yes, Millerand showed himself to be one of Nature's gentlemen in declining the Armistice railway carriage as part of the Presidential train. The day will come when he may have to entertain Germans in his saloon, and plaques bearing Verdun, Marne, etc., might interfere even with Teutonic digestion. When Foch received the German delegates, he gave them a copious breakfast with quantities of butter to which they had been for some time strangers; they then, and perhaps therefore, asked for a little brandy, which was forthcoming, and then for cigars. This was too much, and the Maréchal muttered to an A.D.C., '*Donnez des cigares mais du deuxième ordre.*' Those who have experience of Foch's own smokes, chimney black and of appalling strength, may well wonder what the second-class lot would be like.

Cambon will be sadly missed here; he leaves a host of friends and can never have made an enemy. I would much have liked — who would not? — to have been present at one of the conversations between him and Grey when each spoke his own language to the entire understanding of the other. May we credit finally to Cambon

the remark when he first saw jazz dancing: '*Je n'ai jamais vu des figures si tristes, ni des derrières si gais*'? What a 'Frenchy' letter!

Ancaster made an admirable speech on the Agricultural Bill, predicting what will happen if corn prices fall. I think my Lords were a little surprised by his oratory. And, oh, do air Lloyd George's most apt saying that depression in trade is due to the fact that Europe is in rags, being unable to buy the goods we have for sale.

I have read - and you must do so - *Mirrors of Downing Street*, by a Gentleman with a Duster, very clever. The 'Mirrors' and the 'Duster' are undeniable, but I don't recognize the 'Gentleman.'

24th January 1921

MILLERAND, as Minister of War, was bitterly or rather sourly reproached by his colleagues for his silence: he would not tell them any military secrets. His silence and retirement up-stage just now indicate, I suppose, that he is doing some hard thinking. G. came back yesterday; he had been at pains to take over a fairly new tall hat and a rather out-of-date frock-coat for his

'audience' at the Elysée, and to his chagrin found both the President, and N. who conducted him into the presence, *en bourgeois*.

I suppose some of the 2,500,000 which the National Relief Fund had in hand last Midsummer has dissolved by now, but a good lump must still remain and one hopes it will not melt in response to comparatively irresponsible demands, but will be used to diminish the scourge of unemployment which is likely to grow heavier. The Prince of Wales, in addition to his fine work in inaugurating the Fund, seems to have stumped up nearly £4,000 for wages of the clerical staff. There are one or two victims of Farrow's Bank who stand in sore need of relief, but, I suppose, could scarcely be relieved from this source. I hear of an officer who lodged temporarily his gratuity in the bank and finds that the whole sum is in the air or under the ground.

31st January 1921

CAN you tell me anything about the system in France of invaliding wounded officers, scale of pensions, etc.? I know of an officer who has com-

pletely lost the use of his right hand but who has to choose between the Reserve of Officers without pension or being still considered 'eligible for active service,' despite the loss of a limb.

I suppose sharp practice at the W.O. reached its high-water mark when an attempt, happily quickly stopped, was made to charge to Fitzgerald's quite negligible 'estate' the Treasury notes which had been given him for expenses in Russia and which, of course, sank with the *Hampshire*.

One hard case has been adjusted. A Russian princeling was for some reason, and after much hesitation, allowed to be attached to the Guards for the duration of the war, on the distinct understanding that he could claim no compensation for injuries. As he was very rich in 1914 this consideration was tossed aside, but in 1918 he lost both his leg and his fortune. The agreement of course could not be lightly cancelled, but some sort of compromise has been effected and the princeling will get something.

What a political how-d'ye-do you have in Paris, and how much less happy and ready you are with your Unknown Warrior than we were with ours. I am not insular, but for anything appertaining to military ceremonial, give me England every time.

The Betrothal is not a patch on *The Blue Bird*, and I experienced some difficulty in sitting it out, but Gladys Cooper's superb gesture of motherhood was worth a long wait.

MARCH 1921

10th February 1921

MANY thanks for return of Sir Robert Peel's *Letters*; I knew I could trust you in this respect. People who would be entirely scrupulous about money, are often so careless about borrowed books. J. M. told me he saw a volume sold for a tidy sum at — which he was sure was his, but could not positively identify. Some male guest had probably taken the book up to his bedroom, the servant had packed it up unwittingly, and both had forgotten it till bookshelves were being turned out.

4th March 1921

Yes, I think *The Circle* is quite a play to translate into French; Somerset Maugham, as always, brilliant, biting and rather bitter. Aynsworth gave an admirable portrait of an old roué, except that no gentleman, however roué, talks about his false teeth in a drawing-room, but that was chargeable to the author, not the actor. What I disliked in the play was the idea of old people

conniving at adultery on the part of the young; that they had 'gone wrong' themselves furnished no reason for encouraging others to tread the same path.

Lloyd George's ultimatum to Germany as regards reparations is much approved here; Germany planned the War and signed the peace, and now she wants to evade the penalties of the one and the provisions of the other. I have been much 'under the weather' lately and W. is nobly 'treating' me to a fortnight on the Riviera. I shall go towards the end of the month and shall treat myself to two (or three) days in Paris en route, and I shall sleep at Marseilles. One so often hears of people – quite leisured people – who can't go or come back for so many days because they can't get wagon-lits or coupé saloons; one has only to step out of the train at Marseilles, step into it the next morning and arrive much fresher than after a night in a stuffy berth. I like a long day in the train, but hate a night in it.

APRIL 1921

CAP D'AIL,
4th April 1921

A CLOUDLESS, breathless, sunlit morning; my room looks on to the sea and I can see little else. I recommend you this place for one can be as quiet as the dead, or dissipating either at Nice at Monte Carlo within the hour. Princess Louise is in the Hotel and looking anything but a septuagenarian, beautifully turned out without any affectation of youth; I expect she was always the *élégante* of the family. I remember seeing her as a bride at the opening of the Albert Hall, and I also remember that whereas Queen Victoria peremptorily forbade any engagement between Lord Eglinton and Princess Mary she made no demur about the alliance of her own daughter with Lord Lorne. I must not be reminiscent; it savours of dotage. E. S. is also in this Hotel, very disappointed because so far the Duke of Connaught has not asked him to dinner; one feels rather sorry for him; he was such a success up to the War and such a failure in it, this perhaps more due to bad luck than bad management. I will write again but I cannot miss another moment of this morning sunshine.

APRIL 1921

CAP D'AIL,
15th April 1921

I AM so glad about Edmund Talbot; he may represent the one chance – not a substantial one – of peace for Ireland. I think if I were interested in any individual youth I could wish him nothing better than to approximate as nearly as possible to E. T.; his religion is of a piece with all that is best in an Englishman's character; inflexible uprightness mated with the most delightful manners. And oh, to think that it will be Crawford and not Mond to deal with the Kitchener statue. I daresay the latter is 'all right' but I know no one more repellent in method or appearance. G. told me that he was coming back one day from Paris as King's Messenger and had to let Mond and Montagu into his compartment; he said he felt quite hot to think of them as representatives of His Majesty's Government.

I had tea at Ciro's at S.'s expense, 7 francs for a cup of tea and a morsel of bread and butter. Lady Randolph Churchill paid 16 francs for two cups of tea and two brioches. The Laverys are here and he seems to knock off a picture in a couple of hours; I suppose something has to be done to them later, but they look delightful even if unfinished.

I called at Cowans' house yesterday; the French Government have sent down a train with swing-

ing beds, etc., but he is too weak to travel. With all his faults – and they were many but never mean – he has been a great power for good, anyhow from the national point of view; his contribution to the War was incalculable. I hope, and hear, that he has been received into your Church.

At the Sporting Club last night I saw the King of Sweden on one side of the croupier and the mother of the Queen of Denmark on the other. Anastasie looked rather battered; I like her for writing to one of the French officials as to her residence here during the War, '*Ce n'est pas ma faute que je suis la belle-mère d'un voyou; en tout cas je suis Grande Duchesse de Russie.*' The King of Sweden has pretty good cheek to come to France while France's wounds are still bleeding. Stockholm was a hot-bed of German intrigue while the War was on, and his Queen defied the rules of international etiquette with her constant, and most mischievous, visits to Germany.

For a sort of opera bouffe King what wonderful alliances Nicholas contracted for his offspring. The son married Queen Mary's cousin; I saw him once in costume at a hotel in Vienna, and Arthur Sullivan who was there said he must write a light opera round him; I often wonder if Coyne made up to look like him in *The Merry Widow*. One daughter is a queen and two are Grand Duchesses, while the fourth is connected with our own Royal House. Poor King of Montenegro! When Serbia was at her worst in 1915, he was so bucketed about

A P R I L 1921

that one can scarcely blame him for patching up a sort of arrangement with Austria. France can add him to the list of the *rois en exil* to whom she has given refuge in adversity.

26th April 1921

I GOT back all right yesterday; it was nice seeing you even if only *entre deux trains*.

The Requiem for Cowans was beautifully rendered except that to my mind the Dies Irae has *des longueurs*. The War Minister might have taken the trouble to have himself coached as to the procedure of the Service; he was so befogged and bewildered as to be rather a pitiful sight, especially as he was a central figure.

I hope there were many in the congregation who remembered with gratitude all that Cowans did for the fighting forces. Every mother and wife who had a son or husband in the War should mourn the death of Cowans. To his amazing organization it was due that, although our men must suffer and fall at the enemy's hands, everything that wit could devise or money buy was provided for their comfort and health. His methods

were extraordinary because when working at highest pressure he would go out to a leisurely luncheon and be one of a joyous dinner-party and make up for it by toiling far into the night. He was never fussed or flurried and somehow his supplies were always forthcoming; he must have possessed in supreme degree the quality of being able to delegate duties, see that they were carried out, and supervise the whole concern without unnecessary interference with subordinates in matters of detail.

I did not realize that James Lowther had been Speaker for sixteen years. I wonder how often he has availed himself of the privilege of having an escort of one Household Cavalry trooper on the occasion of the opening of Parliament. A delightful bit of politico-military ritual.

Lord B.'s anxiety to make three years' desertion a ground for divorce may be due to his having – quite undeservedly – had a very unhappy home. But the Bill would open the door – apart from the disregard for the sacrament of marriage – to the ugliest forms of collusion. Do you remember the poor woman in the war who said 'Two pound a week, and no 'usband; it's like 'eaven'?

4th May 1921

SEVEN thousand people was the party entertained by Northcliffe at Olympia for the twenty-fifth birthday of *Daily Mail*.

The before luncheon prayer with its 'Thou has endued thy Servant Alfred with many excellent gifts,' etc., has set folk talking whether Northcliffe is a little off his balance, as he is supposed to have drafted it; it was delivered through a stentophone apparently so that the Almighty should not miss a word of it. The padre who uttered it has designed a pale blue uniform for Army Chaplains with a chalice engraved on their breast; he gives large parochial dances where he takes the floor himself in full evening dress with an amethyst pectoral cross flapping on his shirt-front.

Shackleton tells me he may have to postpone his Arctic Expedition as the joiners' strike prevents his ship being got ready; meanwhile he is paying a large staff and incurring heavy expenses.

Only a hurried line to-night.

Edmund Talbot gets a Viscountcy for going to Ireland, French an Earldom for coming away.

10th May 1921

THE P.M. did not turn up at the banquet, being detained, as were the other Ministers except Birkenhead and Curzon. The Jap speaks no English and his French is limited to '*au revoir*.' The Queen had to have an interpreter behind her chair all through dinner. It can't have been a very 'chatty' meal. The King had much talk with Asquith.

The miners don't dislike the soldiers at all; they would have objected to the Defence Force in plain clothes, as was at first suggested.

Georges Carpentier stayed with Sassoon for three days; he dined with the Prince of Wales at York House and the P.M. dined in Park Lane to meet him. When he was a boy in the mines at Lens, such happenings could scarcely have occurred to him even in a dream. G. met him one day at tea and was praising André Brulé's art as an actor but said he could not quite forgive him for going in for a beauty competition and winning the prize; Carpentier rather looked down his nose and said: '*Il faut avouer que moi je suis arrivé second*.' Un-English is one of the words of which Ouida fell foul, but it is expressive; most of us would consider it rather 'un-English' to go in for a male beauty prize.

One is sorry for Mrs. — as the estrangement from her children for whom she toiled — and for

JUNE 1921

whose sakes she gave up so much – must be very bitter. She is a *maitresse femme*, and such are apt to impose their will, even their goodwill, too forcibly. How curious it is, *per contra*, that one often notices women who have lived rather irregular, or anyhow undomestic, lives who retain their children's affection in quite remarkable degree. The Duchess of — and Lady W. were salient instances of this.

24th June 1921

LONDON gave the King a shout of welcome and at the same time heaved a sigh of relief when he returned safely from Ireland yesterday. The whole occasion seems to have gone off so smoothly that the elaborate police precautions – the only part of the proceedings in which the King seems to have taken no interest – may have been, all honour to Oireland, scarcely necessary. Whatever sins of commission or omission the historian may charge to the House of Hanover, lack of physical courage will not be on the list; it amounts to a total disregard for danger. George III merely said, 'My Lords, I have been shot at,' as if it were

a daily occurrence, when he had been within an ace of assassination on his way to Parliament: Victoria insisted on driving back past the place on Constitution Hill where a man had aimed a pistol at her so as to 'get it over.' The wretch was there again, fired, was arrested and the young Queen drove on, quite unmoved. King Edward was only irritated, not the least alarmed, when Spiridio's bullet almost grazed his head in the railway carriage at Brussels, and so on. S. told me the King dismissed as wholly negligible any suggestion of personal danger at Belfast.

Northcliffe is going on a world tour: there are some who wish that the Napoleon of journalism would, in one of his 'moods,' elect to remain in the other hemisphere.

What will be the final upshot of Smuts' interview with De Valera? In the War and since, Smuts has always been in positions to exercise great influence without incurring responsibility – not that he probably has any wish to shirk the latter. Anyhow, in the South African War he seemed to combine the heart of a dare-devil soldier with the head of a very astute lawyer.

7th July 1921

THE Children's Party at Marlborough House a great success, except that some of the tiny tots were rather frightened by the clowns, and the clowns themselves a little alarmed by the long front row of Kings and Queens who watched them. The Belgians came late and had to leave early, and the King and Queen went with them to rehearse the opening quadrille of to-morrow's Ball. I suppose they think a great many people will have forgotten – and others may not know – how to dance a quadrille. I believe d'Egville was to put them through their paces. He must be the grandson of my teacher. Queen Alexandra was her own lovely self and nothing – anyhow in this country – has ever been lovelier.

G. gave me a description of the party at Mrs. C.'s; fifty to dinner, and to his amazement he was told to take in the American Ambassadress; he mildly pointed out that she had precedence of every woman – including Duchesses – and that to allot her to a nobody would be a slight on the Stars and Stripes. But the young gentleman who was 'running' the party insisted, and Her Excellency is a good-natured woman who did not seem to mind. An expensive concert – following a most expensive dinner – was slightly marred by forgetfulness to have the piano tuned.

If is a delightful fantasy of Dunsany's. It would

be difficult to find anyone less fanciful in appearance than he is; and it is delightfully acted. Gladys Cooper sucking her tooth as she consumes a hard sweetmeat in the Tube and carries on a desultory conversation, is something to remember. I suppose only a really beautiful woman can afford to de-beautify herself for the sake of her part, but she looked radiantly lovely in the Eastern Scene.

I am so glad that there is to be a Memorial to Frank Maxwell at Imperial Service College; it is the continuation of Westward Ho! where he was brought up.

I wonder if you ever met him, the beloved 'Brat'? He died gloriously, if a little reckless of his own life, in the front line; he fretted his soul out in India to get to the Front and, however short his time there, was able to show that a long spell of Staff work had done nothing to spoil him as a Regimental Officer. Of Kitchener's Staff in South Africa and India, Victor Brooke was almost the first officer to fall in France, Hamilton was killed in the first Battle of Ypres, Marker died of wounds a few days later, Nigel Learmonth was killed at Gallipoli, Fitz was, of course, close at hand when the *Hampshire* went down; so the Chief has all the 'boys' he loved with him again; perhaps of them all, he relied on Fitz the most and loved Frank Maxwell the best.

AUGUST 1921

10th August 1921

MUCH comment on Stamfordham's unhappy wording of the letter to Northcliffe as to N. having confirmed what the King had said. It surely does not require an arrivist newspaper proprietor to confirm a Sovereign's dictum.

The Prince of Wales may well be reluctant to go to India: who would care to arrive at a country house and find some of the guests unwilling to meet you, and a proportion of the servants refusing to wait on you? His charm and desire to please are such that they may serve to break down any hostility, but one feels that an occasion which in a couple of years might prove a blazing success, is exposed to comparative failure just to bolster up Montagu's policy.

Everyone is content to see Mahon's name in the promotion list; he did well in Egypt and South Africa, even better at Gallipoli and perhaps best of all at Salonika. A delight of the Boer War was to see Curly Hutton tracing points on a map with snow-white forefinger and 'Mahout' following him either with a dingy thumb or the stem of a rather 'foul' pipe. Good also to see Fergusson and Davies in the same category: an attempt, quickly nipped in the bud, was made by R. to put out the latter as a scapegoat when we were checked at Neuve Chapelle.

What a pretty thought of the Roumanians to

AUGUST 1921

have a wreath made of flowers gathered on Roumanian soil where French soldiers had fought, and put on the unknown poilu's grave. Did you see Queen Marie at —'s? Was she wearing her pearls and has she kept her beauty? Nearly twenty-five years ago at a party in Portman Square I thought her one of the most radiantly lovely women I ever saw.

I like your being asked to find a cook for the Nuncio. Is he by way of being a gourmet or an epicure like Cardinal Wiseman, of whom Father Faber said: 'One must admit that the dear Cardinal has a lobster-salad side to his character.'

Is post-War Paris the same as pre-War Paris in August? Has there been the same social exodus in July? Here it seems that more and more people ignore the 'end of the season,' even if they recognize any 'season' at all, and now August no longer offers the same pleasant 'emptiness' which it once did.

19th *August* 1921

ON the principle that it is wrong to discard any information without sifting it, Haig was of

course right to allow his attention to be drawn to the Kitchener messages which the psychic lady – whose identity is concealed but whose good faith is undeniable – conveyed to him. But I am sure it was with reluctance that he caused them to be officially examined, and with relief that, after four months' fair trial, he could decide that even if they emanated from the spirit world they were far too inaccurate to be traced to Lord Kitchener. I only heard about this the other day.

Mary Jerrold in *Quality Street* is delightful even if she is not, and no one ever will be, quite what Marion Terry was, though she has the same '*larmes dans la voix*.' I believe she and Marie Löhr were both trained by Mrs. Kendal who said to them: 'My dears, while you are young Marie may get more bouquets and more bonbons, but when you are old, Mary may get more engagements.'

Northcliffe must be wholly devoid of any sense of humour; otherwise this prancing and prating in New York would be unthinkable.

Winterton was loudly cheered the other evening when he accused the P.M. of sapping the strength of the Conservative Party and for assuming the airs, if not the position, of a President. One hears constantly of *beauté de diable*, which could be applied to Winterton, with his Hamilton good looks and perpetual youthfulness: is there such a thing as '*esprit de diable*'? If so, Winterton possesses it in devastating degree, although he is the kindest friend possible. I believe when Mond was

obstructive or obtrusive, Winterton would murmur audibly: 'Silence in the Ghetto,' which produced the desired effect.

Everyone wonders how young Sykes will do with his yearlings; he has the enthusiasm without the experience of his grandfather; his father had neither experience nor enthusiasm in the matter. What a gamble a yearling sale is; I believe that Lord Glanely laid out at the last two sales over £25,000 on two colts and I doubt if either of them has earned £100 towards his keep, and keep in a high-class stable now means about £5 a week. A grand career was cut short when Mark Sykes was taken; how usefully his brain and energy could have been employed in these Near Eastern troubles which seem to be hardening and thickening every day.

28th *September* 1921

THE P.M. was well advised not to try his hand with gun or rifle at Blair. Prime Ministers – except Lord Derby – have rarely been good shots. Lord Salisbury liked 'going after' rabbits at Hatfield, but to the amazement of a F.O. messenger

ERRATA

P. 118. The date should be 13th October

P. 207. The date should be 20th June

was found doing so in a frock-coat. Curiously enough, eminent soldiers are usually very poor game shots. The Duke of Wellington was notoriously 'dangerous'; Roberts, Wolseley and Kitchener had no appetite for shooting though they were quite safe. I believe M. Waddington holds top score in that in one day he peppered a keeper, four beaters, a loader and a dog. In my young days the story ran that — in the — Guards invited the Regimental Surgeon-Major to go out after grouse with him. The Surgeon-Major unfortunately put a few pellets into his host's anatomy, which he easily extracted but later sent in an account 'for surgical attendance on the moors.' But is it true that the Presidential shoots at Rambouillet excel in this sort of excitement?

Which newspaper has attributed to British insolence that the rule of keeping to the right of the road has been reversed at Chantilly races? Of course it must be some police order due to the formation of the ground. Do you remember Baroness Alphonse used to say she would like to live at Chantilly so as to see the trains passing on the road to England? Never was a woman so devoted to the country of her birth and so loyal to the country of her husband.

I was 'treated' to the first night of the revue *From A to Z*, which I thought rather dreary rubbish, but the house rocked with laughter and roared with applause, so I suppose my opinion is jaundiced. The stalls were replete with highly

groomed young men, and rather touched-up and ungloved ladies. Ivor Novello kissed his hand to the artists when his name was mentioned, which made me squirm although I am sure it was the right thing to do. Anyhow one forgives him anything for his music.

The War Office has apparently blundered (only I thought Creedy incapable of a blunder) by not replying to Pershing who seems to have had a line battalion waiting in Paris to come over here and pay American honours to the Unknown Warrior. Profuse apologies will of course be offered, but it may take a little time to heal the sore.

11th *October* 1921

ECKHARDSTEIN's reminiscences go to show that his memory is not as good as his appetite. Some of the stuff is interesting and – in the stock phrase of reviewers – will throw a useful light on certain pages of contemporary history. But the stories about King Edward and Labouchere are such a farrago of nonsense that the volume will not be accepted as a book of reference. Lord Rothschild was wont to make an annual gift of

OCTOBER 1921

a huge *pâté de foie gras* to a club of which he was Chairman and Eckhardstein a member; if Eckhardstein got wind of the *pâté* he would descend on it with such voracity that few of the other members – unless they were very quick – got even a bite. A good creature, he was voted almost as great a bore as a glutton, and I always picture the late Duke of Devonshire's dismay when he found himself, by some mistake, let in for a *tête-à-tête* dinner with him.

Does Princess Metternich's death recall her personality to any of your friends, or are they all too juvenile? Half a century is a long time, and I don't suppose she ever showed in Paris after 1870. That upheaval was a great shock to her, and from being a Paris *mondaine* to her finger-tips she became an ardent Vienna philanthropist. I believe King Edward always tried to see her when he went to Marienbad; he never forgot a friend and seldom a face.

18th October 1921

CASSEL's will has been sworn at £6,000,000;
the Chancellor of the Exchequer swoops down

and carries off £2,400,000. *On dit* that Cassel embraced your faith some time long ago and practised it faithfully if fitfully. Just before the War he asked someone if Dick Sutton was really a rich man, and what approximately was his income. The reply was quite undetermined, but suggested £150,000 a year. 'Also,' said Cassel, 'I do not call that rich.'

Have you seen *Jacqueline*? I like the idea of Jacqueline herself never appearing, and Guitry's awakening to his own ferocious fatuousness, and his discovery of the reason why his wife deserted him must be a wonderful bit of acting. How does he do the strangling? One is always nervous lest an emotional actor, if he is a very strong man, should in his excitement make a mistake of a half-inch and press his stage victim's windpipe, in which case she might be a real victim. Lucien Guitry, said Sarah once, is one of the very few who is both a very great actor and a very great artist. What about *La Gloire*? I read that Glory is a symbolic character and the time is the accession of George IV. One associates that monarch – not half so black as he was painted – rather with realism than symbolism, but Rostand and Sarah between them can 'glorify' any subject.

Charles Gatty's *Mary Davies and the Manor of Ebury* is a delightful book though too expensive for most people to buy; the libraries are beginning to be rather shy of these costly works; the Clubs are beginning to be short of shelf room, and the

NOVEMBER 1921

man who formerly added to his country house library whenever he fancied a book has no longer the means to gratify his tastes. Authors will have to produce cheaper and shorter books if they want a brisk market for them, and Lord Beaconsfield will surely be the last to occupy six volumes. One does not, of course, want to go to the other extreme and have the flimsy binding, bad print and worse paper which you have over there. Gatty is particularly happy in tracing the rivers Westbourne and Tybourne which once ran through pleasant meadows from Hampstead Hills to lose themselves in the Thames.

I devoutly hope – but am by no means sure – that the Prince of Wales will have a good time in India: if sense of public duty mated to personal charm can do the trick, it will be done. *Nous verrons.*

12th November 1921

DOES any present of game ever come your way from your friends with châteaux, or are things as here? The Old Mate¹ once told me that

¹ Sir John Astley.

DECEMBER 1921

when the shooting season began he wrote to all his friends in the country, 'Don't forget, we have bread sauce going every day,' this being a gentle reminder as to presents of game – as to which everyone remarks that there is a sad falling off. There are now so many syndicates with their week-end shoots, and otherwise economy has to be so closely observed that I believe the game is mostly sold. Even Lord Iveagh conducts his sport on sound business lines and buys from his agent all the game requisite for the house and for the generous supplies which he sends to hospitals. I suppose the tips to keepers are reduced; when one gave a couple of sovereigns (Rosebery always gave a fiver for a week), one anyhow got away with at least a brace or more of birds, but now if a gun leaves empty-handed, he must surely reduce his largesse.

11th *December* 1921

ARTHUR PEARSON did some noble work, and never was affliction better or more bravely borne. On one point he was adamant, that the men at St. Dunstan's were never to be pitied or

'poor-fellow'd.' But he reminded me that many things we other folk do without conscious thought, blind folk may do as well but have to think about it; in other words, there is a constant strain on them. Northcliffe and Pearson started journalism about the same time; one succeeded and has amassed a fortune beyond the dreams of avarice; the other met with comparative failure because his eyes failed him; Northcliffe has been fantastically egocentric, Pearson has been something of an altruist, and I am sure has been lately the happier man of the two. One is, however, a little too apt to contrast the cheeriness of blind people with the occasional churlishness of the deaf: one forgets that in company the blind man is at his best and the deaf man at his worst. Put the two in a library, the deaf man may be in Paradise while the other is in something like hell. Have I said this before? I have such sympathy with *les pauvres sourds*.

15th December 1921

MORLEY, a mirror of morality, who partnered Mr. Gladstone in the first Home Rule Bill,

and Dunraven, *qui a vécu* and is a Home Ruler of the Federal species, were happy thoughts of George Nathaniel to move and second the Addresses. Samuel Hoare spoke so well and is so keen and enlightened a Churchman that one would like to hear him from a pulpit; he would give many points to many popular preachers of to-day. George Barnes was an equally good choice and no better representative of Labour could be found in the country. When he was in the War Cabinet in 1917 Haig wanted him to pay a visit to G.H.Q. but did not like to invite him direct, so he asked G. to call on him and suggest that he should propose himself, when he would be warmly welcome. Barnes is such a gentleman that he hesitated at first but eventually agreed, and then begged G. to share his luncheon which – very appropriately at that time – consisted of a little pile of sandwiches and two slices of cake.

Don't think me uncharitable if I suggest that members of your Church have a good deal of faith but as a rule very little theology; show yourself an exception and read Gore's *Belief in God*. Even if you skip the part about the Hebrew prophets, you will find very useful his arguments that the Gospels of Mark and Luke should, from the purely historical point of view, be considered the equal of any other authenticated document. Who was it said that Roman Catholics take their faith *table d'hôte* and Anglicans *à la carte*?

20th December 1921

LORD R. is having the time of his life in New York, where his quasi lectures are being swallowed like soup; his volubility is beyond doubt, his vocabulary fairly wide, and I daresay his audiences are not too fastidious if an 'h' is occasionally missing. He is indeed a little unlucky that he has to be compared with Briand and Viviani who are masters of oratory. When Joffre and Viviani toured America in (I think) 1917, on the first occasion Viviani said something which brought tears into Joffre's eyes. This was so effective that they decided to repeat it, and on subsequent occasions the Statesman used the touching phrase and the Soldier sobbed into his pocket handkerchief. This is probably a story *bien brodé* with a substratum of truth.

26th *January* 1922

SIR GEORGE YOUNGER is certainly much '*en évidence*'; he is as sturdy in frame as in character and his strength lies largely in his gentleness; the Unionists who play 'follow my leader' to him like him so much that they let him be the arbiter of their destiny. When he says that an election in February would be a betrayal of the Unionist party, they endorse his statements with the more readiness because they remember Lloyd George's broken pledge, his mishandling of the Coal Commission, his possible grave error of Irish policy, and the dreary fiasco of the Cannes Conference, which cost this country a fantastic sum of money, and I suppose has pretty well cost France Aristide Briand, at any rate for the moment.

28th *February* 1922

THE wedding in the Abbey appears to have gone off very well to-day, but who said that the only brides whose weddings did not 'go off well' were Juliet and Miss Pecksniff. I don't

MARCH 1922

know if the bridegroom was popular in his regiment, but I do know that he did well, really well, in the War. For one of the exams the other day (2nd Class Certificate, I think) an essay had to be written and one young soldier began thus: 'It is often said that the highest duty of a soldier is to die for his Country; this is not so, the highest duty of a soldier is to make the enemies die for their Country.'

2nd March 1922

I AM so glad Lady Feo had just completed her wonderful group depicting Lord Kitchener being borne to his rest by representative Soldiers of the Empire before her last illness forced her to give up work. She was a professional sculptor, whereas her father never rose above amateur status: to my mind her design for the Guards Memorial was far the best sent in, or anyhow of those one was allowed to see. I still burn to think that Queen Victoria considered the marriage of German Princelings to daughters of the house of Lennox and Seymour as *mésalliances*. Until her own daughter espoused a Battenberg Princess Edward of Saxe-Weimar was only recognized as

MARCH 1922

Countess Dornberg, and Prince and Princess Hohenlohe as Count and Countess Gleichen.

Does the Ecole Supérieure correspond pretty closely to our Staff College? Haig paid a very just tribute – it was no more than just as he is never very fluent in praise – to our Staff officers in the War when he unveiled the War Memorial at Camberley the other day. I believe – especially at the time of Verdun – there were bitter complaints that the Head-Quarters Staff at Chantilly was entirely out of touch with the firing line and that, generally speaking, the Staff officer kept himself as quite distinguished – if not aloof – from the regimental officer, and the Government, who for once meddled judiciously in military matters, had to insist on all officers doing turns of regimental duty. With us it was different, and one heard over and over again of gallant fellows like Hugh Dawnay pleading to be allowed to resign their Staff jobs and rejoin their regiments.

28th March 1922

I AM grateful to Colonel Haggard for telling me so much about Mme. de Stäel, and when

I am too diffuse in my epistolary correspondence, remember that she wrote to her daughter: 'I am too busy to-day, my dear, to send you a short letter.' Editors of newspapers, who are conscientious enough to read what is sent to them, must groan over the length of the articles sent 'on approval,' and I expect even leader writers have experience of the blue pencil or even scissors. The art of reducing good stock to clear consommé is as useful in 'letters' as in the kitchen.

The axe is indeed laid, if not to the root, anyhow to the branches, of the military force. Was it a gaffe or a grim jest of the War Secretary to suggest to the cavalry regiments, who are now to be represented by squadrons of amalgamated regiments, that they may thus be at any time revived 'if it should be necessary to do so.' In other words, the gallant horsemen may come by their own again if another European conflagration breaks out. Geddes as an economist is enough to make a cat laugh. Nobody was more *dépensier* than he in the War and I expect often unnecessarily so. As Director of Transport he would employ 500 men where 100 would have done the job. He insisted on having a special car, a Hotchkiss, which he fancied for his own use in France, although he was warned that it was wholly unsuitable. The car was knocked to pieces, and as it was the property of a Guards officer, it had to be put right at the public expense of about £700. He certainly obeyed the apostolic injunction of being all things

to all men, even going so far as to assume a nautical roll when mounting the War Office staircase in naval uniform as First Lord. Nor would it be unjust to suggest that, although as straight as a die, he rather reversed another injunction and, like many others, found it more blessed to receive than to give over a period of agonizing years.

The reduction of the Life Guards is anyhow a false step. They cost little more than a regiment of Line Cavalry; being the King's Household Troops they are not on the roster and are therefore liable – and of course willing – to be sent anywhere and for any period at the King's own pleasure. Of their special efficiency it is enough to remember that Lord Wolseley, the arch-economist, wrote to the Duke of Cambridge in 1882: 'Believe me, Sir, these Household Cavalry are teaching me a lesson, it would pay us well to get men of their stamp of efficiency double the pay we now give.' – But if there is to be only one Regiment it should be at Knightsbridge. From Hyde Park to Parliament and the Palace would take troops less than ten minutes, as it is galloping ground the whole way except about fifty yards. Whereas from Regent's Park it is slippery street all the way, with only one exit which could be held up for some time by any miscreants.

Meanwhile, may all success wait on the British Legion campaign which Haig has finely opened. What about the Expeditionary Force Canteen

M A Y 1922

Fund? Seven millions in the air, or under the ground, or –

3rd May 1922

It was quite a minor scrape into which the P.M.'s Parliamentary Secretary got himself; he cheered a little gathering of female constituents by telling them there was to be a reduction on the tea duty; unfortunately someone telephoned it to the *Evening Standard*, and he stands technically guilty of giving away official information; it was of course the most trifling indiscretion, as while the Folkestone ladies were congratulating themselves on the reductions in their grocers' bills, the Budget was before the House. Fifty years ago Mr. Gladstone dismissed a Private Secretary, who was a close personal friend, because he had inadvertently disclosed a tea duty secret to a business man who made money out of the information.

Can anything of political value emerge from the Genoa Conference? Possibly some financial arrangement will be patched up and later cancelled. L. G. has no diplomatic or F. O. expert with him except Gregory who is very clever but junior; yet

JUNE 1922

the present Ambassador at Rome thoroughly understands international politics, both East and West. L. G. seems to think that *ad hoc* knowledge is a handicap rather than a help. When the Peace Conference was on, it was suggested to him that Bodley might be usefully employed, but he thought that Bodley 'knew too much about France.'

June 1922

YES, indeed, the Birthday Honours have caused some shrugging of shoulders and 'Well, I never's.' A furniture dealer of blameless character but who had not escaped blame from his original shareholders; a business man who, in mid-war, had shamelessly taken himself and his business to the Argentine to escape taxation; another business man who admittedly dealt with a belligerent foe and whose dealings, if not forbidden had been rather chillily permitted by the F.O.; and a South African magnate who had come under the sharpest criticism from the High Commissioner. I suppose it was a case of stepping up to the counter, putting down the cash and

asking for the goods. Some Dry-as-Dust is sure to remind us that Charles I – whom God rest – is supposed to have received consideration for certain honours, but even if true, it was a matter of public knowledge where the money in question was lodged; – here the proceeds of the cheques go to swell a Personal Fund. That this quartette should be raised to the same rank as Plumer, Byng and Horne seems to an uninformed individual like myself a sad misdirection of Patronage.

One did not grudge French's earldom, though one would like to know if the Belgians were consulted before he was allowed to take the title of Ypres.

Will you see the King of Serbia's bride in Paris? How puzzled Queen Victoria would have been to hear of her great-grandchildren as Princes and Princesses of the Serb-Croat-Slovene Kingdom.

What about Genoa? Will Poincaré go? I think he is too clever, and wishes to keep too clean, to do so.

Chetwode, the A.G.-elect, was one of French's protégés and has done him full credit; his work both in France and the East was of the first water and he is a born cavalry leader, if that term has any modern meaning.

The Balkans baffle me, but the recognition of Albania as a sovereign state follows the *de jure* independence granted by Jugo-Slavia. Miss

S E P T E M B E R 1922

Alice leaves £1,500,000 ; with her goes the last of a generation of generous English Rothschilds.

29th *September* 1922

WHY did L. G. back, and back up, the Greeks? A cruel kindness and a sad blunder. Our military circumstances just now are very narrow. With great difficulty were the two battalions of Guards put on their proper establishment. In 1914 we had a Cause, six Divisions ready to take the field at a day's notice, and a man to create new armies. Now we have a confused policy, barely two Divisions to strike a prompt blow, and no one in whom the public puts real trust.

I hear George Curzon was admirable at the Conference. When Poincaré – who is as upright as a dart, as clean as a whistle, and as *cassant* as a nutcracker – said something a little slighting about England, George Nathaniel left the room. P. hurried after him to express excuses and beg him to come back. George deliberately stayed away for twenty minutes to mark his sense of the occasion.

18th October 1922

LADY MILFORD HAVEN will have a very, very slender income as all the money was so largely engaged in Germany, but I believe the Admiralty can do better for widows than the War Office with their 'commiseration pensions.' I hope, anyhow, a point will be stretched here. Prince Louis was not only a good sailor afloat but was responsible for some Intelligence work of a sort which was very valuable to us and rather risky for him. . . . No German ever better justified British nationalization. Providence is indeed merciful in limiting our vision. If Queen Victoria could have foreseen the future of the four grand-daughters to whom she was so devoted, she would never have known a happy moment. One sister practically forbidden to come to this country because her husband was an enemy belligerent; two sisters foully murdered by the country of their adoption; and one now left a widow in narrow circumstances. The little Princess who died of diphtheria in early childhood had the happiest fate of the five.

Many officers will be hard hit by McGrigor's failure. I don't know if responsibility attaches to W.O.

Read *Hassan* to give you a glow.

All Saints, 1922

MORE years ago than I like to remember I heard a preacher say something from the pulpit at St. Paul's which has stuck in my memory: 'The applause of all except really good men is the precise measure of their possible hostility.' A pithy and pregnant phrase, and just now one cannot help thinking of the men who four years ago lauded Lloyd George to the skies and now openly exult in what they think is his perpetual banishment from responsible office. Who knows but that in something like adversity his better qualities may assert and adjust themselves? His moral courage is undeniable, and it stood him, and us, in good stead when the general spirit was a little disposed to droop. I wonder if that extraordinary charm which he can exercise at will has been on the whole a help, or an occasion of falling, to him. The wags compare his rather sour exit from office to Becky Sharp's farewell to Miss Pinkerton's Academy: all that he has done wrong, and there is plenty, is being thrown into high relief: and perhaps it is those who have approved him least who are silent. For the moment, the man is down. Let us anyhow wait till he gets up again and tries to be mischievous before we load him with abuse. Sarah always said of her public: '*On attend mon premier échec.*' I think the English public is usually faithful and

indulgent towards anyone who has rendered good service.

With L. G. disappears from view that Princess of private secretaries, Miss Stevenson: capable and efficient are quite inadequate terms to describe her. The Archbishop of Canterbury, after writing twice and receiving no answer, called in Downing Street to see the Prime Minister as to filling a vacant Bishopric. L. G. said: 'Bishops, oh, Miss Stevenson always does the Bishops.' And if the story be true, she fixed up the matter most successfully with the successor to S. Augustine. I remember in 1917 she travelled to Rapallo with thirty officials, high and low, and played her important, if unseen, part at the Conference to perfection.

13th December 1922

A HORRID book has been published in Canada, *Kitchener Liveth*, supposed to be his revelation from another world communicated to a Los Angeles medium. I hope it will be suppressed. All this spiritualism for profit is hateful, but especially so when it makes a soldier, who was the reverse of talkative in life, talk gibberish after death.

JANUARY 1923

17th *January* 1923

WE are wrapped in thick white fog, too white to be 'Whistlery' as Jimmy affected greys. The Royal betrothal is very satisfactory. In the bride's veins flows the bluest blood of Scotland and the admixture of a thin trickle of Dutch is not unhealthy. One hears nothing but what is good about her, but the same remark could apply to her family for many generations. All her brothers and uncles were in their youth 'smarter' at work and games, better turned out, and generally more successful than the scions of any other family, yet as adults no distinction ever seems to come their way. The Lyons all fought finely and more than one finely fell in the War, but I doubt if there was a D.S.O. awarded to any one of them. The family stands in Scotland on the highest level. No shadow has ever fallen on their shield, yet no Lord Strathmore or any member of his family has ever gained – perhaps they have never sought – prominence in public life.

All luck to Messrs. Baldwin and Norman in their attempt to effect a square deal with our American cousins, who by the bye seem to have forgotten the trifling matter of millions which they have owed us for many a long year. Mr. Mellon, with whom they have to fix up the deal, is, I hear, rich and rude.

I suppose Kate Santley might be alluded to as

FEBRUARY 1923

a sort of English 'Judic,' perhaps a little diluted. Did not the late Duke of Newcastle have the Royalty Theatre reconstructed for her in the dim past? I wonder why she dropped her real name – Evangeline Gajira – quite a box-office proposition by itself.

17th February 1923

You have got hold of the wrong end of the stick. The Ministerial whitebait dinner at Greenwich had its origin in a dinner given every year by a worthy and wealthy Baronet – one Preston – to Pitt at his fishing cottage somewhere in Essex. The distance was later found to be too great, and the scene changed to either Blackheath or Greenwich. It eventually became a sort of Ministerial picnic, everyone subscribing his share. I can't quite remember if other than Cabinet Ministers went – by steamer – to the function, but I am pretty sure that a 'second service' of chicken and ham crept in.

By the bye, is it true that Honoré's¹ children are exempt from fasting and abstinence because

¹ Duc de Luynes.

his father fell in 1870 fighting with the Pontificand Zouaves?

Do you know that, according to an unrepealed Elizabethan law, all citizens of London must refrain from flesh meat on Fridays? The law was passed to stimulate the fishing industry which was at a low ebb, and Hewins always says that whereas he abstains to obey the Church, I do so to obey the law of the land.

Marie Tempest is back having apparently quenched but little of her youth and lost nothing of her magnetic – if rather tricky – charm. She selected Ash Wednesday for her reappearance, but according to the critics the play was so ineffably bad that the audience were subjected to a rather dreary Lenten penance. Feast and fasts are so much more generally observed that it seems odd Ash Wednesday should be disregarded. You and I can remember the theatres were closed, Committees in the House did not sit till the afternoon and hounds did not meet before 1 p.m.

8th March 1923

Mr. BALDWIN told A. at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday that Rothermere had perhaps not altogether unjustifiably approached Bonar Law as to an Earldom which B. L. bluntly refused; hence the bitter feeling. They all stood after dinner at the Palace on Tuesday, and at 11.48 Mrs. Asquith said to the King that her husband ought to go to bed. A gross, but very effective, breach of etiquette.

Mr. Gladstone – who was as perfect a courtier as a statesman – wrote once to the Prince of Wales that he was much shocked at omitting to ask His Royal Highness's permission to be the first to leave a party at Lord Alcester's in order to attend to his duties in the House of Commons. In his early days he said that the whole company always remained united if a member of the Royal family were present, and that the same rule applied if the Archbishop of Canterbury were present.

Have you ever understood this? It is new to me but probably old to everyone else. Shakespeare was 46 just when something (I am not sure what) was being done to the Psalter. In the 46th Psalm 46 words from the beginning is the word 'shake,' and 46 words from the end the word 'spear.' Was this pure coincidence, or did the revisers wangle the thing to do honour to the Bard?

MARCH 1923

W. S. Gilbert once said to me — after a performance, I think, of *Cymbeline*: 'The fact is, Shakespeare wrote d—d bad plays.'

27th March 1923

WELL, the Reine d'attitudes et Princesse des Gestes has passed into the Grand Peutêtre. She always wanted to die on the stage. She told Princess Mary this once. '*Altesse Royale*,' she said, '*je mourrai en scène; c'est mon champ de bataille.*' She never wanted to have a long evening of life away from the theatre, and she practically died when she was struck down in her dressing-room three months ago. And she had no fear of death: when she wanted to cross by Folkestone during the War, and the War Office told her she would very likely be blown up, she only said: '*Mais, mourir avec les soldats! Quelle gloire!*' I suppose comparisons will be drawn between her and Duse; but Duse never attempted the heights which Sarah climbed, Phèdre, Athalie, etc. And to my mind, where they met on common ground as in *Fédora*, it was Sarah who gave you the electric shock, though the art of the other was

perfect. Curiously enough, Duse drew rather 'skinny' houses when she was in the heyday of her career, while she played to capacity when she was evidently a tired woman. Did you ever see Ristori? I did once at Drury Lane, but my recollection is a little dim. I fancy she was the 'best read' of the three. I remember going to tea with her in Rome where the daughter still lives. In Sarah I have lost a friend of thirty years' standing, and Sarah is one who never swerved in her friendships or failed a friend.

And what a worker she was. She lived for the theatre and seemed to grudge every moment she spent out of it. But when she was out of it, she was her simple self. So many of our young actresses – according to the illustrated papers – play parts all the day, and when they go on the stage in the evening, they are only themselves. The young actors take their profession more seriously and follow Mrs. Kendal's prescription to Basil Rathbone: 'Never accept a part unless it is going to take something out of you.'

What a Cabotin scree! Sarah fills one's thoughts to-day.

27th May 1923

ONE is so glad that the King turned a deaf ear to the shrill ultra-Protestant scream and paid his visit to the Pope. Twenty years ago the thing was made even more difficult for King Edward who was equally persistent but secured from the Prime Minister a formal consent to a – so-called – informal visit. King Edward was, however, equally determined that his *point de départ* for the Vatican should be the British Embassy and not the English College which Cardinal Rampollá (I think) urged. Small wonder that during the first months of the War the Pope was disposed towards the Central Powers; Germany and Austria were the only belligerents powerfully represented at the Vatican and they could pour into the Holy Father's ear – without fear of contradiction – their pernicious propaganda. Gladstone was the first of many statesmen who was sure that someone from this country should be accredited to the Vatican if only for the question with regard to Irish priests. Our Special Envoy in early 1915 was quickly able to stem the stream of enemy falsehoods and the permanent Minister – Roman or Anglican – has done much for the interests of the King's Roman Catholic subjects. I always chuckle to think, *per contra*, the despatch of Prince Bülow, with his Italian wife, to Rome did nothing to prevent Italy 'joining up.'

I hear the Queen looked radiant at the birthday luncheon yesterday; middle age has touched her the more gently because when quite young she looked a little more than her years; perhaps because, whatever the circumstances, she was always '*mise à quatre épingles*.' Twenty years hence she will look no whit older than she does to-day. Her life is very full, but she never allows it to be overcrowded; she never dawdles but never hurries, and every minute being accounted for, she never has to catch up the lost minute. She may not perhaps grip popular imagination, as did her mother and mother-in-law, but for sheer merit you will not find her parallel in history. When kingdoms were tumbling about, I believe she was not the least important buttress of the British Throne – and she really did capture the Parisians in 1914; did you not tell me that you heard people in the crowd saying, '*C'est le printemps même*' and '*Elle a son chic à elle*' when she drove from the station in the pale blue which suits her so well?

I quite understand Foch being a little hurt about the Haig book, but much more so about the very injudicious article in the *Army Quarterly*. What an ass B. was to show it to him, as he might quite easily have missed it. The Maréchal is due here very soon: I hope he won't let this disagreeable upset his arrangements.

6th June 1923

I HAVE been twice to the Tournament which seems to get better every year, and the War has given to it a complexion of reality. There is a very pretty equestrian display, not by the Cavalry but by the R.A.S.C.; each man controls two horses, both of whom he has personally trained, riding the wheel and driving the lead: of course the long rein gives the horse a wonderful mouth and balance and requires perfect 'hands,' natural or acquired, on the part of the man. It looks very simple but is probably very much the reverse.

Anything to do with horses in England always seems natural; in France, riding, however good it may be, always seems a little forced. No one 'dresses' here for a Horse Show, whereas at the Concours Hippique (such a highbrow label to start with), one can almost hear the girls say: '*Regarde donc, qu'ils sont jolis dans leur habits rouges.*' The French may easily retort that they are natural actors, whereas any excellencies we achieve in that line are the result of labour and often sorrow.

You know – or probably you don't – that some irreverent people call the delightful Belgian Ambassador '*le faux gaga*' because he sometimes assumes an air of extreme simplicity and then succeeds in getting everybody to adopt his view of a diplomatic situation, which is more often than not the right one. But he can be very

AUGUST 1923

'ready' in reply. One evening at the Palace he was talking courteously, if a little chillily, to the German Ambassadress, and Stamer came up and said, not very tactfully: 'Are you discussing reparations?' 'No,' said Moncheur, 'restitutions.' I believe, however, Stamer is doing his very difficult duty with considerable skill and, as far as possible, keeps himself to himself.

P.S. I beg pardon; the F.O. does not recognize the title of Ambassadress.

25th August 1923

WHAT a 'horror' of the air. Of course the smallest reverse, or even the daily routine of the War, would have been infinitely more costly in lives, but somehow one was then tuned to disasters, and this ghastly accident seems of far greater magnitude than it would have done five years ago.

The *Morning Post* is rather ruthlessly pinning F. E. down to his earlier statements about Ulster; the gift of vigorous oratory has its dangerous side, and anyhow the Government's *volte-face* is made the more striking by the Galloper's pre-War pronouncements.

2nd *September* 1923

RIPON shot fifty-six brace of grouse, ate – for him – a large luncheon and died; people call this an appropriate end. I don't agree, because if Ripon had chosen to use the fine brain with which he had been endowed, he could have been a good deal more than a peerless – and a rather selfish – shot. There are few public positions he could not have adequately held, but he remained just a dilettante as regards Art, and only an authority on a rather useless subject. He hated anything like competition because he could not bear the idea of being beaten; he would play billiards for hours but always with the marker who knew his business better than to win. What a contrast to John Morley with his steady and ingrained honesty of purpose. I think I should be always tempted to admire him chiefly for never saying a word against the War – or its conduct – although he stepped out of the Cabinet rather than be a party to it. Next I admire him for declining to deal with the religious side of Gladstone's words and work because, as an agnostic, he felt he could not do justice to this side of a great Christian. His cheeseparing policy in India was unhappy, but he believed that the Japanese defeat of Russia justified a reduction in the Indian Army, whereas the victory of an Oriental Power over a (so-called) Western Power was one of the first stones flung in

SEPTEMBER 1923

India against British supremacy, and I suppose much of the subsequent unrest in the East can be traced to it.

Hassan is a success even if it proves only a *succès d'estime*. Ainley very fine; Quartermaine's voice and diction alone worth the price of a stall; Basil Rathbone ought to have played the King of the Beggars as the part demands youth. The Ghost scene was rather muddled, and the procession of torturers provoked a smile rather than a shiver; it was all good to see but it is better to read. I wonder how many people in the audience, listening to the beautiful lines about the golden road to Samarkand, know that Samarkand occurs in a memorandum of Lord Wolseley as an important supply post and *point d'appui* in the event of North-West Frontier hostilities; so the 'golden road' has a military as well as a poetic ring about it.

4th September 1923

G. TELLS me that he talked with George Nathaniel at the Junior Carlton (the Carlton is closed) for over an hour two nights ago. G. N. was delightful, his best and wittiest self though

he seemed ill and in pain; he had discussed Renan at length with Poincaré, an interesting, if not an *ad hoc*, subject. G. N. fully endorses Kitchener's low estimate of the Greek; the latter used to say that in his experience all dwellers in the East, Near or Far, drew a line somewhere in commercial negotiations beneath which they don't sink, except the Greeks who have no line.

Sir Dighton attended Mrs. Sneyd's funeral in the country and then motored down to Sandringham; not bad at ninety-one.

Doubleday announce a little monograph of Sarah as 'By the Author of the Letters of Lord and Lady Wolseley.' Only an American could allude to a person as being the 'Author' of another person's letters; presumably they meant editor.

16th September 1923

EVERYONE vocal about the multiplicity and munificence of Horace Farquhar's bequests, though the legatees are all Vere de Vere. Mr. Gladstone, when a dead millionaire was held up for his admiration because he had left large sums

SEPTEMBER 1923

for charities, said, 'Thank him for nothing; he was obliged to leave it somewhere as he couldn't take it with him.'

Our record of street accidents the last three months shows that over 170 people have been killed. I wonder how this dreadful, and probably avoidable, total compares with yours. I fancy the French test is much higher and that a large percentage of lady applicants are turned down. Here a P.O. for five shillings does the trick, no inquiry even being made as to age or sex.

How delightful the Etonian is, and ever has been. Asquith was lecturing a little while ago to the First Hundred (a terrifying experience one has found it), and by special concession Mrs. Asquith was allowed to be present. She arrived late and anxiously asked if Mr. Asquith had been long on his feet. 'Only about ten minutes,' was the reply of the kindly boy desirous to console her. 'And so far you have not missed anything.'

28th *September* 1923

To Reid Dick's studio this morning to see his work for the Kitchener Chapel; the Pièta is

going to be very, very beautiful; he admits that so far it is better than the recumbent figure, but that is also going to be very, very good, but of course quite differently conceived to the statue on Horse Guards' Parade. Tweed had called with friendly, and helpful, advice.

Walter Long pays a fine tribute to Sclater in *The Times*; I think Kitchener put on record that the rapid raising of the New Armies was largely due to the Adjutant-General's infinite capacity for taking pains.

I have a complimentary ticket for the Boxe and, for once, am unpatriotic enough to hope that Carpentier will win, because I think that thus it will be better for the entente, the British being better 'losers' than the French.

The Aga Khan rather fretfully says that if Charles Rothschild's unhappy death had occurred twenty-four hours earlier, the Rothschild representative would not have run and the unbeaten horse would have been unbeaten still; I suppose competition always tends to make one see things from the purely personal point of view. I had not come across Charles Rothschild for several years, but there was so much of the generosity of his father in him that one cannot but regret the clouded close of what might have been a very valuable life. He used to say that Jews develop – and therefore deteriorate – earlier than other people on account of their very pronounced sexual inclinations.

6th October 1923

THE man on the bus was treated this morning to a large part of George Curzon's rather sour speech at the Imperial Conference, but I am told his words were rather imposed on him by the Treasury; Keynes, Niemeyer, and a man whose name was Cohen and is something else, inspire our financial policy.

I believe Walpurga – what an outlandish name – Lady Paget had something, but not nearly all she claims, to do with the betrothal of Albert Edward and Alexandra. Lady Wynne (the mother of the late Sir Watkin) was the person who arranged for Queen Alexandra to be taught English as a girl with a view to a possible English alliance.

Yes, the Tempête was the popular dance at children's and semi-grown-up dances of our young days, and even later at country balls; fancy its being danced again in Paris.

L. G. is being richly run by the Hearst press; his income to-day as compared with his income of twenty years ago is suggestive of the fairy god-mother; let us leave it at that.

What a snappy, snarly letter; put it down to any cause you like.

10th *November* 1923

A FILTHY day, alternately drizzling and drenching rain; muggy overhead, muddy underfoot. It is a very nice and 'suitable' engagement, but my mind travels back to poor Angus Mackintosh; I see him now in hospital at Boulogne panting to get his breath through the one lung which the Germans left him. Pluck, a clean life, Canadian air, and his wife's devotion conspired to keep him alive for four years; in the years to come it will occur over and over again that men who apparently went through the War without a bruise, suffered from strain almost as much as those who were wounded; and the worst of this is that the effects – physical or moral – may only assert themselves when the War itself is half forgotten, and when sympathy with War sufferers will be even more languid than it is to-day.

The foreman who called about distempering the walls of my room this morning spoke English with a strong German accent; he said he was born in France and bred in Switzerland, and one knows what that means.

MARCH 1924

5th March 1924

I SUPPOSE giving the freedom of Hyde Park to taxis, of which I availed myself most conveniently yesterday, is one of the many minor revolutions of which one can only ask why it has been so long postponed. Not until the 'eighties did Queen Victoria allow other than Royal or Embassy carriages to go down Constitution Hill, and then with the proviso that the road must be closed to vehicles when she was in London; as, however, her stays in the capital could be measured by hours, the condition was not a hard one.

I hear Walsh gains every day in favour at the War Office and his insistence that Mrs. W. shall sit in his room because he has no secrets from her is condoned. He is flexible to the point of trusting the soldiers to know their job, which is quite the reverse of being feeble; and soldiers think he will honestly represent the Army's needs and interests in Parliament.

One is told that to some degree Arthur Meyer was the Henry Labouchere of Paris, only that Meyer was a Royalist to his finger-tips while Labby professed to be a Republican, although in spite of his sniffs and sneers, the British Sovereign had no more loyal subject. Labby's fault in politics – of course a merit in journalism – was that at all costs he must have his joke.

MARCH 1924

Will the *Gaulois* continue to thrive without its editor?

26th March 1924

I HOPE the French are saying kind things about Nivelle now that he is gone; he was a good soldier, though perhaps not so good as he thought himself. He was a sturdy Protestant and an honest gentleman, with some British blood in his veins; his sortie from Verdun may be remembered when the dust is lying on the cruel Champagne operations. And when in 1917 L. G. did the unforgettable thing in deputing Bertier to go down to Dover and ask him to suggest to our Government that Haig should be removed, Nivelle, to his honour, stoutly declined to descend to anything so mean or underhand. During that visit he decorated Acheson and other officers at the W.O. and according to custom, kissed them all, which they found rather trying.

I dined with C. Lowther last night. His dinner consisted of 6 plovers' eggs, 3 coffee éclairs with extra cream, and a pint of port. He was bubbling

M A Y 1924

over with wit; a real raconteur who never has to pump up his stories.

What a pie in Egypt, with Zaghlul practically a dictator. If only Wingate had been listened to, how much might have been saved: and so unfortunate that Allenby should be away. His nickname of the Bull hardly suggests his being the best man to unravel a delicate if not dangerous diplomatic situation; but he stands for strength and straightforwardness, the two British characteristics in the Oriental eye.

The members of the M.C. are much annoyed about the luncheon given by the Duke of Marlborough to Winston Churchill, which resolved itself into a political anti-Government affair with reporters present, etc. It is considered to be a mark of disrespect to the King who, although he scarcely ever visits it, regards the Club in some sense as his own preserve, has given it solid help and taken interest in every detail.

3rd May 1924

I saw the Queen of Roumania at R.U.S. the other day; the embonpoint has done nothing

M A Y 1924

to spoil her so far, but it must not go further. She was beautifully dressed, and I hear our Queen, who does not personally smile on Paris confectious, was greatly interested in, and thoroughly inspected, the gowns Queen Marie brought over.

Who will be the new President? It seems that the little cloud which hung between Millerand and Poincaré during part of the War has quite blown away and they have resumed their former close friendly relations. Millerand certainly backed his Prime Minister as regards the Ruhr, which our leading Liberal paper had the audacity to suggest was scarcely less criminal than the Hun invasion of Belgium.

8th May 1924

DINED at the Embassy Club last night with C. at nine-fifteen to see the dancers. For some reason *cela me revoltait*; perhaps because a lady (?) of hybrid extraction, took out a powder puff and applied it not only to her face but to the region under her arms. And the dancers! Old Lord — and still older — making arrangements with their next partners instead of with their imminent

MAY 1924

undertakers. And Lady — aged seventy, who approves the fashion of men not wearing gloves because, ‘when I jazz, give me flesh to flesh.’ Ugh! The really young folks to-day are so much cleaner than the elders who ape and run after youth and try to be *dans le mouvement*. Extravagances are so forgivable to youth and so odious, because not really spontaneous, when indulged in by middle age. I always say one cannot help being old, and fat, and rather a bore, but one can help being ridiculous.

16th May 1924

‘DIPLOMACY’ — like Charity — never fails; but I wish they would date the play to 1877 when we were on the brink of a war with Russia; the secret plan with its attendant sobstuff would thus be a much stronger stage proposition. Also at that time men rode in the Bois, as in the Row, in the afternoon, and there would be nothing odd in Orloff making a call in correct riding dress at five o’clock; but to stride into a lady’s drawing-room in breeches and butcher boots strikes a wrong note and is not worth doing so just for the

AUGUST 1924

sake of the 'business' with the riding-switch. I saw the original production and have seen every revival; the first caste was much the best except for Zicka where Mrs. Bancroft was sadly out of place. Olga Nethersole was excellent in Hare's production; I would have liked to have seen Lady Tree play the part ten years ago, and I would like to see Gladys Cooper play it to-day. She can of course do 'Dora' 'on her head.' Pierson and Bartet were Sardou's choice for the two characters, nearly half a century ago, and both ladies are alive and I believe flourishing exceedingly.

10th August 1924

ARE the Germans drifting back to Paris? and do they receive 'differential' treatment? You will see swarms of them in Switzerland and only for that reason I don't envy you your Lucerne. I believe they spent money like water on the Riviera last winter; why don't they pay their debts before gadding about?

Some pacifists - I will not say pro-Germans - are up against the wording of the National Anthem. They don't like 'Scatter his enemies

And make them fall,' though they don't go quite so far as to object to 'Send him victorious.' I believe these peace-time conscientious objectors would prefer something like 'Assuage his opponents' only the rhythm would be awkward. The Boer fought like a gentleman, and as soon as peace was made he was at once rightly styled 'our former opponent,' but this term is still a little too mild for the Boche, as to whom 'Confound his knavish tricks' seems, with respect to the introduction of poison gas, specially applicable. At the end of Queen Victoria's reign 'God Save the Queen' had been subjected to a 'rallentando' which irritated King Edward, and on his accession he told Elgar that the National Anthem should not sound like a dirge. With some trouble the band scores were altered and the pace speeded up till it reached tempo which rather suggested a jig and caused the present King to ask that 'God Save the King' should be slowed down a little.

26th *September* 1924

YOUNG Lady Eltham, who is pretty and attractive, has been brought to bed of a daughter

at the Gibbs' house, where W. G. has installed himself as P. G. with rich promises of testamentary dispositions. I suppose the infant will be christened Mary. When George III called his fourth daughter after his aunt, the Landgravine of Hesse, he could scarcely have thought how royal, and semi-royal, Marys would have multiplied indefinitely. But no multiplication is too great if it keeps green the memory of the best and bravest of Princesses, the Princess Mary of our day. Why will papers allude to Lord Cambridge as a royal peer? Since the technical 'disgrace' of the Dukes of Cumberland and Albany, the Duke of Connaught, apart from the King's sons, remains the only royal peer. I believe the Duke of Coburg really tried to play the game in the War, anyhow by doing what he could for our prisoners and refusing to listen to abuse of this country; one remembers him as such a delightful Eton boy that not even the circumstance of a petty German Court could altogether spoil him.

That the 700th anniversary of the coming of the Friars to England should have been celebrated just now at Canterbury by Roman Catholics and ourselves alike is good; that Canon Barnes should have been sent to Birmingham is bad. Since Mr. Gladstone and Lord Salisbury, the appointments to the Episcopal Bench have been in the hands, almost invariably, of Nonconformists; there would be something farcical in this if it were not liable to be tragic.

OCTOBER 1924

Have you any journalistic, as well as political, clerics in France? The Dean of St. Paul's is becoming as familiar a figure in the Press as in the precincts of his Cathedral. Whether or no it is 'quite the thing' for a well-paid dignitary of the Church to be a regularly paid contributor to a 'daily' is an open question. Dean Inge is supposed to be 'liberal' in his views, but I fancy not sufficiently so as to forget that 'no dogma, no Dean.'

HOTEL —,

PARIS,

24th October 1924

BAD luck your being away just when I am here, and these few lines must partly make amends; the sun, and I hope some successful *numéros* at Monte Carlo will more than do the rest.

I sat for some time with Guitry in his dressing-room last night; he says many of the French are *gorgés d'argent* and speculating with it; that is why prices are so ridiculously high, being forced up by the demand for things. I have had a few words

with Foch who looks much better, and younger, than he did last year; he is not sure whether Poincaré will come back, but he emphasized how clean and straight P. has always been, and says that amongst the other French politicians – Clemenceau excepted – there is no man of outstanding talent. The Tiger is laid up with angina, but his secretary said: '*Il a commencé à manger ce matin,*' so they think he will be all right.

The Canada déjeuner at Versailles was a wonderful affair and very well organized except, as usual, the speeches were too many and too long. It was odd to see the Duke of Connaught sitting under a picture of the battle of Fontenoy. I find Mrs. S. as *élégante* as ever and looking more like forty-six than seventy-six.

You must go to Sasha's revue when you come back, really very pretty; the Champs d'Elysée from Catherine de Medici down to to-day, and Yvonne, *jolie à croquer*, dressed as the Prince of Wales, brought down the house.

I hope you will come over next month even if it means a taste of London fog.

15th November 1924

I BELIEVE Birkenhead really had the refusal of the Woolsack, but felt he had been for so long absent from expounding the Law that he might not still be the supreme 'opinion' which, a while ago, he admittedly was. How will Austen do at the F.O.? One always associates the post with a long line of men who, in a sense, had been trained from boyhood for the job.

Frank Weston is a real loss to England and an irreparable loss to East Africa; he was as saintly a man as ever sat on the Bench of Bishops; anyone who touched his life at any point had the impression that with him the battle between good and evil must have been fought out in some earlier existence, and that the Tempter would not cross his path again. He was as happy and as busy when he served as a Major commanding the Zanzibar Carrier Corps as when in cope and mitre at a Cathedral service. His biographer – he can scarcely escape biography – may well be put to it to find any shadow on the shield, and a shadowless shield may be found monotonous.

Lilian Braithwaite in *The Vortex* gives the lie to the saying that middle-age is often a man's apotheosis and almost always a woman's *dégringolade*. She was never a quarter so good an actress or so attractive when she was in the spring, as she is now in the early autumn of life.

DECEMBER 1924

In the last Act the son, irritated by his mother making herself ridiculous – if not worse – with a youthful lover, knocks the china off the mantel-piece. Surely the converse is historically true. Do I not remember rightly that when G. accused Madame de — of ‘carrying on’ with — she was so *énervée* that she seized a piece of Sèvres and dashed it to the ground.

12th December 1924

I MET the Doubledays at dinner and was startled to hear that an American publisher had never read *The Wide Wide World*; I read it when I was twelve and can still quote passages from it; I always thought it was an American classic. The Doubledays had seen *The Swan*, and Mrs. D. thought Basil Rathbone ‘the most beautiful young man who had ever come to New York.’

The Prince of Wales seems to have been at his very best at the Kitchener Scholars’ Dinner, but I was told something must have tickled his risible muscles when Stanley alluded to Sir John Maxwell’s wind being taken, as he positively laughed till he cried. At the end he stood at the door and

JANUARY 1925

shook hands with every Scholar, his own spontaneous and most happy idea. One feels that Kitchener would have loved the Fund, or the income of it to be spent in equipping the flower of English youth for any part in life they may adopt; the Rhodes Scholars are not entirely British (before the War there were many Germans); the Kitchener Scholars are all home-grown and the doors of every University can be open to them. I believe that the amount subscribed by the public in Kitchener's memory – including, of course, India, Egypt and Sudan – was over £800,000, an amazing figure.

29th *January* 1925

EVERYONE approves of Gosse's review of George Wyndham's book, but he has already had reproachful letters from Lady Grey and other members of the family. Personally I think Gosse is quite right. George Wyndham was a genius, but in a sense, or rather perhaps in essence, he was also a dilettante although he accomplished solid public work; two volumes of biography with 600 letters is altogether disproportionate and the

thought of it would probably have displeased G. W. himself.

I go back thirty years and remember a discussion at Oxford as to which of five young men would go furthest or climb highest, George Curzon, St. John Brodrick, Wolmer, Hugo Charteris and George Wyndham. All agreed that George Curzon's public life would be the weightiest and most important; that Charteris was perhaps the 'cleverest'; but that perhaps only George Wyndham would be found to have the *feu sacré*. There was so little he could not do, and even less he did not know. 'How beautifully you ride,' Queen Alexandra said to him on her way to a review in Phoenix Park; she had only thought of him as a highly trained politician and student. If G. W. forgave, he never forgot, being driven from office by the Ulster Members, and the wound was the worse because Mr. Balfour did nothing to avert or heal it.

Claud Hamilton lived for nearly three days without any nourishment at all, and with him goes *un vrai type*; an *arriéré* Conservative, he eschewed mechanical transport and in the country would charter a one-horse fly rather than take a taxi; he would allude to a stationmaster as a rascal because that functionary munched an apple while he talked to him; he never had a hair awry on his head or a pin amiss in his dress, but whether as a soldier, a politician, a chairman of committee or, above all, a friend, he was always

MARCH 1925

as reliable and loyal as he was efficient. I hear Lord H. and Sir — — both rather tipsy-boo, came to blows in the hall of the — Club a day or two ago, enough to make Lord Claud turn in his newly dug grave.

1st *March* 1925

You can tell people there is nothing serious although the King does not recover as rapidly as one hoped; perhaps the effects of that typhoid attack in the 'nineties have never quite worn off. Certainly no subject leads a more healthy — and I think happy — life than the Sovereign.

I believe Asquith has given his word of honour that he will always couple Asquith with Oxford in the Earldom; he is a great man but not quite great enough to be in undiluted succession to the line of De Veres. Mr. Gladstone once said that the only peerage that could in any degree tempt him would be the Earldom of Liverpool.

The Prince of Wales, who hates giving trouble, has asked that his quarters on the *Repulse* shall not be 'done up' for him; he is due to start about the 28th.

A P R I L 1925

I am so glad that Birdwood gets both the bâton and the Indian Command; the one well deserved, and the latter definitely promised. I don't think a Field Marshal has ever before been a Commander-in-Chief in India.

28th *April* 1925

WHAT a good Press the King and Queen have had in Paris, but why did Doumergue make his déjeuner so long? I hope while it lasted it took the taste of Caillaux out of his mouth. When last the King and Queen were in Paris Madame Caillaux was the sinister heroine of the hour; her irrepressible husband, after all his vicissitudes and turpitudes, seems to have come to the top again.

I hear Abbas wants to come to England, to see Wembley Exhibition, but F.O. frowns on the idea.

29th April 1925

FORTY years ago Liddon said that if St. Paul were to rise from the grave and traverse the London streets on a Bank Holiday he would have to amend his statement that they which are drunken are drunken in the night. Nowadays Liddon's insinuation would be as inaccurate as Paul's pronouncement, for one hardly ever, by day or night, sees a tipsy man in the street. And for this reason, I suppose, one seldom sees a drunken scene enacted except in Irish plays. What a bore a drunken man on the stage can be, not excepting Sir Toby Belch; a tipsy woman is even worse. Winifred Emery, when she got a little 'squiffy' in Pinero's *Benefit of the Doubt*, did it so exquisitely as to make it positively attractive. But Edna Best and Tallulah Bankhead are quite unable to make *Fallen Angels* anything else than a couple of well-dressed viragoes quarrelling in their cups, and a very unsavoury quarrel it is.

This is the tail of yesterday's letter which I find I did not post.

4th May 1925

THE question is already acute as to who will be George Curzon's biographer. Lady Curzon is supposed to favour Nicolson, but the choice will of course rest with his literary executors and they are sure to choose wisely. One only hopes the writer will dig down below the official and describe the man; for perhaps a more curious combination of characters never before existed in any one Englishman. Generous to a fault at times, he could strain economy to its limits at others. Nobody could be more 'standoffish' at one moment and more genial at another; nobody could be more biting and bitter to a political opponent; and no one more warm-hearted to a personal friend. And he never swerved in his friendships or failed a friend: and once a friend, though one lost touch with him for ever so long a time, he never dropped the threads of friendship, or anyhow could – and did – always pick them up again and in a moment would recall all happy associations of the past.

9th May 1925

THE statue of Kitchener is to be placed very appropriately on the south side of the Horse Guards Parade, i.e. with his back to the politicians of whom he was always inclined to be shy, and facing the troops whom he always wholly trusted. John Tweed has secured a Corporal of Horse of the Life Guards for his model. G. tells me that the other morning Lord Peel the Chief Commissioner and Tweed were fixing the exact spot when Mrs. Baldwin pranced out on to the Parade and protested against the choice of the site as she said it would spoil her garden. *Her* garden, forsooth; fancy the late Lady Salisbury talking about the staircase at the Foreign Office as *her* staircase. The wife of the Prime Minister has no official existence and no sort of precedence, and if she unduly asserts herself she only makes herself ridiculous. No political wife ever understood her place, or made better use of what does unofficially appertain to it, than Mrs. Gladstone, and I believe one might almost bracket Madame Poincaré with her. Mrs. Baldwin is so full of good works that one is sorry if she steps outside her limits of privilege.

You were in and near Ypres so often in the War that you must not miss *The Immortal Salient* for which Pulteney and a Miss Brice are responsible.

M A Y 1925

15th *May* 1925

I AM not surprised that the French papers are nearly silent about Milner, although the French have good reason to be grateful to him for what he did at Doullens. Milner dies, greatly respected, but I doubt if generally wept. His work at the War Office was one of his best efforts, and he certainly played a very handsome and valuable part in securing unity of command for which he never sought any credit, and one must not forget that such things as quick sympathy, insight into racial characteristics, and so forth, in which Milner was lacking, are God-given qualities, scarcely to be acquired by mere painstaking. Whatever his service to the State, and it was considerable, it will be always up against him that he went on with the Boer War when Kitchener would have ended it, and that at the end, the Statesman stood out – or tried to stand out – for far harder terms on the Boers than the Soldier wanted to impose on them.

The King will give Birdwood the bâton at the Levée on the 25th.

23rd May 1925

I AM so glad the King went to see Lord Ypres in the Vincent Square Home which is, I believe, 'run' by the Scarbroughs. The matron was rather afraid he might die in the car on the way to Deal, but this was spared him, and Lady Beauchamp arranged things so well that his wife was at his pillow when the end came. I think with his funeral French – the name trips off one's tongue – will begin to fade from memory; perhaps the good things will be remembered when his blunders are forgotten. He was essentially one of those men who are great in minor circumstances but, being without prevision or breadth of outlook, are small when large operations come to their hand. If French's post had been confined to an Army command, he would probably have emerged from the War with all honour, but as C.-in-C. the Command very quickly outgrew the Commander, and, except for 'Fitz' Watt his immediate entourage did little to make relations happier between him and the men with whom he had to work. But the ride to Kimberley and the flank march to Ypres will always stand to his credit.

Will Somerset Maugham's *Rain* be translated for Paris? It is very clever if rather crude, and Olga Lindo has not quite weight enough for the part, good artist though she be; anyhow the play is less distressing than the book, which left me with the

J U N E 1925

feeling of having taken an emetic. But what a pen the man does wield, and what a brain to inspire it!

4th June 1925

TELL everybody you see that Foch at the Birthday Parade was a triumphant success. As you know, the original idea of his coming emanated from —. But the King eagerly accepted it, caused the invitation to be proffered in the most graceful way and gracefully insisted that the Soldier of France should not go to the expense of a British Field Marshal's uniform but should wear his own, which proved — from the picturesque point of view — to be most effective. Foch was open-mouthed in genuine admiration for the superb 'turn-out' and march past. Certainly there are three occasions of a purely English character which no other country could hope to produce: the Trooping of the Colour, the Royal Tournament, and the Eton and Harrow match. They are all as British and as good as the bread sauce I so dearly love and so sadly miss in France. Theo Byard, when he was studying in Paris, used to beg for this, and when his *femme de ménage*

JUNE 1925

gave him chicken, she always started with: '*J'ai oubliée votre sale sauce.*'

Read the letter in to-day's *Times* supplementing the obituary notice of Guitry; I did not quite realize the influence which his Russian experience had on his wonderful art. I doubt if this rising generation will ever see his like. I think his *Pasteur* will be my most vivid recollection; unfortunately its production here was not nearly so good as in Paris where the scene was better and where perhaps it was allowed to produce itself.

18th June 1925

PANOUSE gives up the military attaché-ship next month. Worthington-Evans wanted him so much to stay on, and sent word to Poincaré that no other officer would ever get the same facilities. Panouse is so trusted that he has the entrée to the W.O. *par les grandes et les petites portes*, and no paper would be refused him. Poincaré said he recognized this, but Panouse had been already three years over his time and he dared not extend it. Since the War a rule has been passed in Clubs that no foreigner shall be other than a temporary

SEPTEMBER 1925

member: an exception is to be made in favour of Panouse at the Marlborough on the grounds not only of his popularity but because he is determined to live half the year in England.

Was Viviani purely French or had he a dash of Corsican? I think he too lost an only son in the War, quite early on.

8th September 1925

SOMEONE asked me the other day whether the Odéon could in any way be compared to the Old Vic: I said no, as the Old Vic is essentially a people's theatre and the plays are always classics. I saw Edith Evans play Cleopatra ten days ago; physically, of course, she is slightly at a disadvantage, but her art is unquestionable, and every little detail is thought out. I remember going to a dress rehearsal of *Antony and Cleopatra* over thirty years ago. Coghlan did not know ten consecutive lines of his part, and Mrs. Langtry, who had spent fabulous sums on her dresses and looked more beautiful than Cleopatra herself, was wholly inadequate. How Coghlan managed to get through – as he did – on the first night was a marvel.

11th September 1925

WHAT a mess Sarraïl has made in Syria: and what an utter contrast to Weygand; is he Semitic in origin? Anyhow, he is the worst type of political general of which, one may thank God, this country has been singularly free since Marlborough, and he was so great a soldier that other things – even very nasty things – must be overlooked.

The Prince of Wales will require sheds in which to house all the presents showered on him as a result of his travels. I believe Indian gifts were as far as possible tactfully fended off. I don't think there is any question of *do ut des*.

When Albert Edward went to India in 1875 Sir Bartle Frere, who ran the tour, said that unless £100,000 was voted for it, the Prince would be unable to give presents suitable to his rank; it was anyhow a very one-sided arrangement as any presents the Prince received he was according to custom to hand over to the Government; he was to pay out of his purse for whatever he gave and this would mop £30,000 out of the grant. I believe in the end the Indian Treasury stumped up an extra £10,000 for presents, but the Prince was far too generous a giver not to be largely out of pocket at the end.

27th October 1925

At the Ribblesdale funeral service, I hear, Lady Oxford arrived when it was half over, forced her way to the front, knelt down, smelt her gloves, and then stood up to survey the congregation as if she were at the Opera. She loves the limelight but she redeems almost anything by being a most loyal wife to a truly great husband.

I am asked to go to tea to-morrow and hear Contesse B. play the harp; not me, not much. Old as I am I am just young enough to have escaped the harp in my youth and don't wish to make its close acquaintance in old age.

Treves is said to have put away for forty years, the usual period, in the British Museum, a diagnosis of the health of the King and Queen and Royal Family; I wonder if in 1965 this will prove to be a document of great interest.

The Page-Wilson letters – apart from their literary merit – make one wonder how the actual manual labour – at the end of the day's labour – was achieved; just as one wonders how the Duke of Wellington could draft a memorandum of eighteen pages and copy it with his own hand, or how Dickens wrote, and rewrote, his novels with their plots crossing and recrossing one another. But I believe letter writing came to the Ambassador as a delightful recreation, and he would stretch himself on paper as Lord Balfour would

NOVEMBER 1925

stretch himself on a golf course or Birkenhead on a tennis court or at a bridge table. Mr. Page seems to have regarded Kitchener with mingled wonderment and admiration and not to have accepted at all easily the theory of a three years' war.

22nd November 1925

Do you remember the Stranger in *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* saying: 'Duty so soon tires, Love goes all the way'? I always thought that was the secret of Queen Alexandra's magnetic attraction for which one might search in vain, not only one's own experience but all English history, for a parallel, not even excepting Mary of Scots. It was not those who knew her, *cela va sans dire*, but the people who stood at street corners – and how often one has stood there oneself – to watch her pass, who felt that the bow and the smile (she never nodded) were for *me*. And whether as a guest in her house or one of a crowd outside it, there was always the sense that she was pleased (and I believe she *was* pleased) to see one. Just as no picture has ever done her justice, even

DECEMBER 1925

faintly, so no memoir will ever describe exactly just what she has meant to us these sixty years. She was always lovely and her life was just as lovely as it was long. People sometimes spoke of her as not being clever. Tommy rot. If she were not clever, she must have possessed some quality much better than cleverness to enable her to tread for over forty years a difficult, and even dangerous, path without ever making a single slip. When Prussia and Austria were bullying Denmark in 1864 and the young Princess was the idol of the people, I always wonder what would have happened if she had enlisted Palmerston, who was pro-Denmark himself, and got up an agitation to protect her country.

She suffered then – as she so often suffered – in silence. She was so good, really and wholly good, that one feels she is ‘far better with Christ.’ I am so glad dear old Lord Halifax travelled from Yorkshire to spend a few hours with her not long ago.

17th December 1925

CHARTERIS was quite right to falsify the ‘corpse factory’ story, but I don’t think it ever

served a very useful propaganda. The Germans did such dreadful things to living bodies that utilizing corpses – whether theirs or ours – for practical purposes of war seemed to reasonable people, even if true, a minor offence.

So with the flux of time one has come to see that the murder of heroic Edith Cavell was a hideous German blunder, but as an outrage it pales before what befell countless and unavenged French and Belgian women. France may be very ‘tarsome’ in her post-War conduct, but it should be burnt into European memory that twice within a generation she has seen her fair country invaded, her houses laid low, her inhabitants insulted and shot down and her women violated. Great Britain and America cannot look on the War from quite the same angle as France and Belgium or even Italy. Just as I remember hearing Bonar Law say, ‘Lloyd George cannot view the War quite as Asquith and I do; we have both lost a son.’ Perhaps Prussia regards 1870 and 1914 as reprisals for Napoleon having refused Queen Louise’s pearls.

30th January 1926

I HOPE you will come over if only to see the Sargent exhibition. Did you ever hear the Paris Rothschilds express any opinion of his 'Lady Sassoon'? I have heard it spoken of as his masterpiece among his portraits of women, while Alfred de Rothschild, who thought he knew something of pictures, scornfully alluded to it as a caricature. I stood in front of it for some minutes yesterday and liked it better every second, more especially the beautiful hands which are so beautifully treated.

Do you like 'stretches'? Here is one. G. has written to beg Stradbroke to go and see *Quality Street* which the Boucicault Company are giving next month in Melbourne. If he does so, young Brian Aherne, who made such a hit in *White Cargo*, will, in forty years' time, be able to say that he played the Peninsular hero before a man whose own father fought in the Peninsular War. It seems so odd that Stradbroke, who is only about sixty-three, can boast that his father was at the battle of Toulouse (1814) and was wounded at Quatre Bras; of course Lord Stradbroke was a good deal over sixty when he married and nearer seventy when his son was born. Stradbroke, by the bye, has been a great success in Australia where also Sir John Higgins seems to have 'thought Imperially' by getting up a Board and

disposing of the profit of over 3,000,000 bales of carry-over wool with which we were overloaded at the end of the War.

Here is a case of a well-deserved K.C.M.G. There was a Caroline law, only repealed last century, under which it was forbidden to bury anybody 'in any shirt, shift, sheet or shroud made or mingled with flax, hemp, silk, or any other material other than sheep wool.' Our grandfathers and grandmothers must have offended against this law.

12th February 1926

WHAT do people say about Boni de Castellane's *Art d'Etre Pauvre*; so salacious that one rather licks one's lips over it, but is thoroughly ashamed of doing so as the book is in execrable taste. What was the American influence used at the Vatican to prevent his getting his nullity decree, his plea being that as his wife would not become a Catholic, she evidently did not contemplate a permanent union. A. H. told me that when his wife was trying to get free, he was summoned to Westminster Cathedral, where he told the Church

MARCH 1926

dignitaries that there were no grounds whatever for any plea for nullity: it had been a marriage of pure affection and there was fruit of the issue; a little later he was bidden to proceed to Rome to give evidence there. He replied politely that he had no money with which to buy a ticket, and after a few weeks was told that his wife's suit for nullity had been granted by the Vatican, though why or wherefore he does not know to this day. Are there not thirty-five reasons for which an annulment can be obtained?

17th March 1926

COBHAM certainly did a record: breakfast at Pisa, lunch at Lyons, tea at Croydon, dinner in London, and a visit to Buckingham Palace before going to bed.

I tried, but failed, to sit out *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; one can like a play which is fundamentally interesting and only incidentally a little nasty, but I hate a play which is fundamentally nasty and only fitfully amusing.

23rd March 1926

SIDNEY LEE gave up writing *King Edward* last year, so his death does not interfere with the work. Do you know his *Queen Victoria* and *King Edward from Birth to Accession*? They are capital books of reference and very attractive reading as well. Lee met the then Prince of Wales more than once and sat next to him at the luncheon in connection with the Dictionary of National Biography; he was struck with the way in which the Prince, by his perfect tact and exquisite charm, could conceal the fact that he had only a bowing acquaintance with books and did not until that moment know that Lee himself specialized in, and was the great contemporary authority on, Shakespeare.

Lee was elected a member of the Marlborough Club but he was never quite happy there and his pipe caused some lifting of eyebrows and shrugging of shoulders. I believe the Marlowe Memorial was in great measure due to him. Gosse went down with Irving for its unveiling, and as they were going away a woman sidled up to him and said, 'I beg your pardon, sir, but could you tell me if the widow was present to-day?' Gosse began to explain that this was scarcely likely as Marlowe had died in the sixteenth century, and then discovered that the poor lady thought it was a statue of Marwood and had

MARCH 1926

confused the Elizabethan poet with the Victorian executioner.

28th *March* 1926

I SUPPOSE Honoré will feel Orleans' death as their lives and interests were so closely bound up; but will anybody genuinely regret him, or even the cause he represented? Certainly no one ever respected him. To Queen Alexandra was due that King Edward consented finally to give him an audience – rather a chilly one. His insults to Queen Victoria were of a piece with his ingratitude to the country which had sheltered him.

The Prince of Wales's pluck as a horseman is undeniable, and his keenness is all the more admirable because it is a product of his adolescence. He had little or no appetite for riding as a boy, and his training in a Household Cavalry Riding School was somewhat perfunctory. Even in 1916 he was not quite comfortable on a restive horse when inspecting troops in Egypt. But he is thorough in everything which he undertakes and is sure of success whatever he does. I am told he

A P R I L 1926

goes really well to hounds, has good hands, and can hold his own with any amateur between the sticks.

15th April 1926

I EXPECT Austen Chamberlain will propose the health of France at the forthcoming U. Ass. of Great Britain and France lunch to the French Ambassador. Will he tiptoe into French, in which he rather unjustifiably 'fancies' himself? It will be much better if he speaks English and has a good interpreter for the French Press.

A really tiptop scene between Louise Hampton and Marie Tempest in a very jolly play, *Cat's Cradle*, but the feminine duel went to show that, consummate actress though she be, Marie Tempest cannot 'cry' on the stage; one has so often seen tears streaming down the cheeks of Mrs. Kendal, Ellen and Marion Terry and others. Forbes Robertson thinks very highly of Robert Harris's performance in *St. Bernard* and praise from Forby is praise indeed.

Can you get me *Les Soldats en Egypte*? I suppose the author is — or rather was — a cousin of the Duc

A P R I L 1926

de Mouchy; what was the reason of the cooling of friendship between the Duc and the Prince of Wales in the 'seventies?

26th *April* 1926

HOWLING winds and bitter cold mark our April here and one longs for a slice of your Midi sunshine; I don't like shrewish Spring, give me an amiable, mellow Autumn.

I dined with the Gosses a night or two ago; food fair, house hideous, conversation delightful to listen to – if a little too clever and cultivated for me to join in. Gosse thinks highly of Philip Guedalla, and he is always so helpful to promising writers.

The coal looks black (no joke intended), but I always cling to A. de R.'s theory that domestic crises generally right themselves and it is only when foreign difficulties arise that a position becomes perilous.

The service for Bancroft was rather a misfire, or, shall we say, a misfit; that long Lesson read with theatrical rather than grammatical pauses, and rather stilted prayers with a lamentable absence

JULY 1926

of Our Father; the church very full, and many may have been drawn off from paying their tribute to Hwfa Williams in whom they have lost a very staunch and delightful friend.

I don't know why the legacy to F. E. failed to materialize; I believe he made some unfortunate joke which rankled and caused his name to be erased from the will. Everyone is sorry, for F. E. is generous to a fault himself, and others would have shared in the enjoyment of good things.

Mrs. Byard has given a beautiful chalice pall for the Kitchener Chapel, and Lady Naylor-Leyland is giving some of the Altar furniture.

29th July 1926

Yes, truly, Romney's portrait of Mrs. Davenport, all lovely though it be, fetched an outside price: is 'outside' the equivalent for '*hors ligne*'? The story runs that one eminent dealer called at Christie's and left an order to buy the picture at any price, thinking £25,000 would be the very top figure bid, and went off to play golf. Another eminent dealer called later and was very courteously told by the auctioneers that they

could not bid for him as they had another commission. Dealer No. 2 tumbled to the situation, saw there was no risk, and determined that his competitor should have an expensive morning. An accessoir of the story is that if Dealer No. 1 had offered the vendor in the morning £30,000, the offer would probably have been accepted; thus he ruefully remarks that his game of golf cost him £25,000.

At Pembroke Lodge the other day Lady Dudley – lovely in old age as in youth – told G. that when she was in Paris on her honeymoon, an invitation came for them to stay at Compiègne; jewels were hurriedly sent for from London, and she wore at dinner her parure of rubies. These, she only learnt afterwards, had been given by the Emperor to the Comtesse de Beauregard who, as Miss Howard, had been very helpful to him in his pre-Presidential days; the lady had sold these particular jewels at Christie's where Lord Dudley had bought them; thus the young bride of nineteen found herself next the Emperor wearing, all unconsciously, the rubies he had given to his quondam mistress.

Can you imagine anything more discourteous than the behaviour the other day of Lenglen – the hussy – who refused to play tennis at Wimbledon because she was huffed about something, although the Queen had come down to see her! Lenglen, I was told, stood in the path to try to make belated apologies, but the Queen, with

JULY 1926

perfect dignity, was able to have her attention drawn elsewhere and not see her. The Queen was so delighted with the performance of 'Mozart' that G. could truly say to the Guitrys: '*C'était le baume après la blessure.*'

Yes, I saw Jane Cowle in *Easy Virtue* which, despite its title, is quite a proper play. Her technique is perfect, face and figure very attractive; a very interesting but, I thought, a wholly 'technical' performance.

31st July 1926

HAVE you ever heard of the Anglo-French Luncheon Club, which has for its object the promotion of social intercourse between English and French and for its method the entertainment of well-known Frenchmen and Frenchwomen? It is largely run by a very wonderful Mrs. Le Blond whose first husband was 'Ride to Khiva' Burnaby, and she does her honorary job most admirably. We (for I am a member) entertained Gouraud there, and he treated us to a first-class piece of oratory. English soldiers are generally good writers but still more generally bad speakers: if

S E P T E M B E R 1926

Gouraud is as good on paper as he is on his legs, he must have a pretty literary gift. Gosse was in the Chair and the man of letters paled altogether in the matter of speaking beside the Soldier; I don't know whether the phrases and gestures (one arm, remember) were spontaneous or studied, but they were altogether admirable.

The luncheon in Bloomsbury was a fearful affair. A red soup (a sort of unhealthy cousin to Bortsch), chunks of meat cut from an animal I never identified, and Brussels sprouts which had asserted themselves loudly before they appeared, followed by a delicious ice – probably bought – of which I – till then practically fasting – partook largely, but so far without hurt. But the talk was delightful, which was the main point.

SHROPSHIRE,
7th September 1926

REALLY they ought to put back the seasons and make September a summer month; delicious here, infinitely better than in June, and May is always hateful.

'Associations' still have a market value. Plas
196

Newydd – the home of the Ladies of Llangollen, which they rented at 1s. 9d. a week and which, after the death of the surviving lady, fetched £1,240 – is now priced at £8,400. Like all ‘interesting houses, it seemed to me to have drawbacks from the ‘modern tenant’ point of view, but Wordsworth scarcely did it justice when he described it as a low-roofed cot.

I hear it has been piping hot in the Touraine: I am not sure if you count Valençay as the Touraine. I entirely agree with you in preferring Azay le Rideau to the others. (Amboise I put next.) Did you happen to see in a certain apartment in the hotel there a notice which I remember as something like:

*‘Qui tient à sa tranquillité
Sait respecter celle des autres.’*

I am so glad Boson loves Valençay. I went there *en touriste* and thought the place beautiful. We were shown over the house and there was the well-remembered picture of Madame de Sagan ‘*en paon.*’ What a *bal costumé* that must have been, but I believe the Queen did not approve of the Prince and Princess of Wales attending it.

23rd October 1926

I HAVE read through Robertson's *Soldiers and Statesmen* at two sittings, or rather lyings, for I have been laid up for the last five days. How curious that a man with comparatively slender education and little technical literary ability can write so usefully, informingly and agreeably while the Hs. and Es. flounder about with all sorts of wild assertions and false deductions and with 'ego' repeated *ad nauseam*. How sorry a thing that L. G. should have treated so badly the two men, Haig and Robertson, in whom utter trust could have been reposed, while he listened eagerly to any *arriviste* who tickled his ear.

I have come to like your friend Madame — almost as much as you do. She has her faults but like St. Peter's faults there is more beauty in them than in many people's merits. She would, I feel sure, put her hand in the fire rather than hurt anyone's feelings. St. Paul must have hurt St. Peter's feelings dreadfully when he 'openly rebuked' him. If I had been Peter I should have been tempted to say: 'What about Stephen and your holding those clothes?'

Does any big house, *entre cour et jardin*, exist now in Paris besides the Rothschilds and the Embassies, I mean, of course, outside the Bois. Has Madame de Sagan's garden been altogether built over? I suppose this will some day happen

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OCTOBER 1926

to the Grosvenor House garden and here there will soon be nothing left but Holland House *qua* 'House.' I can just remember going to Northumberland House and hearing murmurs of indignation about it being given up to a railway company. As Stafford House still stands, although it is turned into a museum suggestive of a jumble sale, why on earth do they disguise it under the name of Lancaster House merely to make it a pendant to the recently named York House? I wish they would rename Marlborough House Cornwall House. As the Prince of Wales is Duke of Cornwall (and such a good Duke of Cornwall), it would be so much better for his house to bear his own title than that of old Sarah. It seems so odd, the residences of the Sovereign and the Heir Apparent should be called after subjects of rather questionable fame.

25th October 1926

C. P. SCOTT has been rightly honoured in Manchester. I detest the anti-French and pro-German campaign which the *Guardian* pursues. I often try, and try in vain, to find in its columns

one kind word for France or one word hostile to Germany: one might almost think this would be a journalistic mistake from the business point of view. But Scott must believe his policy and pronouncements to be right, for no 'cleaner' paper than his can exist; and it is a sort of bitter tonic to read what one believes to be wrong so admirably put. I don't suppose you have any provincial paper in France to be mentioned in the same breath with the *Manchester Guardian*; the *Yorkshire Post* is its only runner up, and the others – excellent as they are – the 'also rans.'

Gosse told G. that one day at Whittingham he asked Balfour whether he had read Lord Haldane's last book (on relativity, I think) and Balfour said yes, but that he could not make head or tail of it; not long after at Cloan, Gosse asked Haldane if he had ever read *Foundations of Belief*, and Haldane said he had gone through it from cover to cover but was no wiser afterwards. I like these two philosophers being unable to appreciate one another's erudite works.

24th November 1926

ONE hears that the King was advised, with the shuffle of titles, to drop the *Defender of the Faith*. I am glad anyhow that he adheres to it; although of course now quite meaningless, it has a nice ring about it.

The Duke of Devonshire has followed the very practical fashion of forming his estates into a company; if the prospectus were open to the public with the annual meeting-cum-luncheon at Chatsworth, what a subscription list there would be, but the Company is a close preserve.

Three delicate questions: can you answer them? How old is Cécile Sorel? How old is her husband? Were the 127 boxes she has taken to America really stuffed with clothes, or were they more for *réclame*? And is it true that by some happy chance her telephone number is Ségur 6243, suggesting the respective ages of the happy couple?

11th December 1926

THE Service for the Dedication of the Chapel was very beautiful, and no one in the large congregation more evidently impressed by it than the Kitchener Scholars: this was indeed as it should be. Lord Oxford looked bent and sad, but he could have had no stab of self-reproach, for no Prime Minister could have been more loyal to Kitchener or more admirable as regards everything that concerned the army.

I saw – and spoke to – Philipps, one of the dozen survivors of the *Hampshire*; his story never varies that he last saw Kitchener standing on the quarter-deck, with his arms clasped and quite unmoved. I liked especially the prayer which runs: ‘We beseech Thee for them whose names, whose dwelling, whose every need Thou knowest. Grant them light and rest, peace and refreshment in the ample folds of Thy great love. May their lives unfold themselves in Thy sight and may they find a sweet employment in the spacious fields of Eternity.’ How curious it is to think that the then Bishop of Winchester drove Dolling from Portsmouth because he wanted to dedicate a chapel to the Holy Souls, and this is precisely what the Dean and Chapter have so rightly permitted: the Chapel will always be known as the Kitchener Chapel but its actual title is the Chapel of the Holy Souls, and countless and continuous prayers

will be offered there for those who fell at the hands of the enemy in those years of blood and agony. I wonder if it is altogether a good thing for Church folk that all religious persecution has ceased: humility is now so recognized a virtue that the danger now is lest the Publican should boast that he is not a Pharisee.

19th December 1926

WHAT a city of dreadful lights Paris must have been on Friday: I hear it was called the '*purée de pois Londrienne*'; perhaps it was some relief to get one in against poor old England. As a matter of fact our 'pea-soupers' have been very few since electric light came in.

I suppose Prince Henry will not be allowed a flutter at Monte Carlo. I don't think the Duke of Connaught ever goes into the rooms: even King Edward, who loved cards in a club or private house, said once to G.: '*Au fond*, I hate the tables at Monte Carlo,' and when he was at Cannes he very seldom visited them.

The official report of the Marlborough 'nullity' shows that the Vatican did not overstep legal

limits; from every other point of view it cuts no ice.

Guedalla's *Palmerston* is delightful reading and would be even more so if it were not quite so replete with epigrams; the pudding is so full of plums that one longs for a mouthful of dough. And I wish he would not talk all the time about 'Minnie.' Strachey, of course, always says 'Victoria,' but the Queen was a public character and Lady Palmerston was not, so to mention her by her Christian name suggests a sort of 'got-up' familiarity. Otherwise one can have nothing but praise for the book. It is worth buying if you can't borrow. No, better still. I will bring it over next month and you shall read it during the week I am in Paris. I don't think this is contravening too far the rules of the London Library, without which life would be a much poorer thing than it is. I suppose there is nothing like it in any other capital.

24th March 1927

GOSSE has been ill and Lord Haldane was to be his first visitor. The night before he had

arranged to go to Hanover Terrace, Lord H. dreamt that he was on his way from the House of Lords and when close to Westminster Hospital he met the ghost of Mr. Gladstone who held him up and reproached him bitterly for being in the Labour Government. In his dream he tried for some time to get away from Mr. G. and when he finally did so, he found Gosse in great anxiety on account of his non-appearance. The next day he started on his actual errand, and at the precise spot where he met Mr. Gladstone's ghost, he was knocked down by a motor-bus. A policeman picked him up, dusted him, and he went on to find Gosse, as in his dream, very feverishly expecting him. It was as if the G.O.M., revisiting this world, said to himself: 'Well, if my exhortations have no effect, we will see what a motor-bus will do.'

I am so glad that Doumergue is coming over this Spring; his postponement last year had a valid reason, but feelings were a little ruffled. From what one is told he is so amiable and unfussy that he will be sure to create a really good impression. Every day it grows more important that France and England should walk *bras dessus bras dessous*, only France must not always expect England to 'treat' her.

Surely Grand Opera must 'pay' this season, unless it is impossible, with the present demands of orchestras, artists and staff, to make Opera pay at all. The house has been sold out at almost

every performance, and people have advertised in the agony column of *The Times* for seats. If Covent Garden cannot support itself under these conditions, no wonder that Gage and Mapelson both were financially drained when in rivalry, and that Hammerstein could not 'stand up to' the Opera Syndicate. Milan and Munich are to be envied and marvelled at.

Was it not at the 'Star and Garter' that Ouida's heroes and heroines wreathed one another's hair with crimson roses which had been steeped in purple Burgundy. For the brave fellows whom I saw there yesterday it is far from roses, roses all the way, but anyhow to the casual visitor they seem so patient and in a sense contented that one does not pity but only admires them. The place is wonderfully organized; perhaps a little over-organized, as I believe there is a rather more 'homey' sense at Queen Alexandra's Home for disabled soldiers hard by at Roehampton. I always wonder if the profiteers feel a little stab when they see any of these men who have given – and given everything – where they themselves have gained. Anyhow, it is 'up to' the men who have made money to see to it that the men who have lost their limbs want for nothing.

20th May 1927

I SAW the rehearsal of the ceremony for the Presentation of New Standards to the Household Cavalry. An entirely new ritual had to be devised, Life Guards and Blues had to work together, horses had to be trained to the minute, arrangements made for the King – who was represented – to dismount under the archway; there have been three or four undress rehearsals, but this, the only dress rehearsal, went without the slightest hitch or pause, and I believe precisely in the prescribed time. Why is it that the converse always takes place at the last rehearsal of a play? Especially if anything at all spectacular. The performers are often scarcely word perfect, the producer irritable, the stage manager hustled, and the author, if present, dissatisfied. I suppose unity of command is responsible for the smooth working of a military show: there is no fear of a star chucking or sulking, and every individual is merely a part of the result with individualism rigidly suppressed.

Foch told G. that he had been obliged to decline writing a preface to the Wilson book until certain passages were taken out, such as: 'The four idiots then talked' – the four idiots being Asquith, Lloyd George, Haldane and Winston. Lady W. says that she owed the book to her husband's memory: she must have a very odd

JUNE 1927

idea of how best to preserve his memory. Foch says that the man who emerges from the book larger in merit than anyone is Kitchener.

Sassoon has voided Trent of the French *meubles* reminiscent of the Avenue Marigny and Laversine and filled it with the simplest – and withal most expensive – chintz-covered furniture and everything which the best English taste could suggest, the whole governed by a wonderful colour scheme, which refreshes the eyes as much as the noble armchairs rest the body.

26th June 1927

I WONDER what the Empress Eugénie's pictures will fetch at Christie's. I suppose the Winterhalter is among them. Not long before the Empress's death, someone asked to which of the ladies who formed her entourage she gave the palm for beauty, and she named Baroness Alphonse Rothschild, who was, I believe, lovely in her day if not quite in our day. It is nice to think that an Englishwoman outshone the beauties from every capital in Europe. Of course Madame Metternich was admittedly ugly, and

the Empress would not care to mention Mme. Castiglione, but what about Mme. de Galliffet with her marvellous *beauté de diable*, Duchesse de Mouchy, Princesse Caraman Chimay? Try and find someone who has a photograph of Baroness Alphonse before the '70 War. It seems astounding that the books from Britwell have already fetched a good deal over £200,000. There is another important sale imminent, and still the library will not be depleted.

I think John Hare was the actor whom King Edward preferred to all others, although Toole was much more his personal friend. Hare was a very perfect painter of stage miniatures; his art was polished and he always 'got over the foot-lights,' although a leading—but emphatically not jealous—*confrère* told me that he always remained an amateur below the knees; that he could never quite walk the Stage, though a gesture with hand or head, as well as intonation, was irreproachable.

JULY 1927

30th July 1927

SIDNEY LEE'S *King Edward* fills nearly 800 closely written pages, of which I have read nearly half in advance in three days. The book teems with interest, although of course scissors and paste-pot have played a large part in compiling it, and at least in one case a passage is lifted bodily from some other book without being put 'in quotes.' I think it a great pity the publishers did not engage a man who knew something at first hand about the King and his circumstances to complete the work when Lee had to give up; otherwise Markham ought to have full marks. The portrait of the King is well drawn, and what pleases me most is that no attempt is made to belittle his contribution to the Entente as Lord Lansdowne rather ungenerously sought to do. I believe it was Eric Barrington who threw out a hint about the visit to Paris when the King was resting on the yacht after his operation, but the success of the visit was entirely his own, and it would be difficult to name anyone capable of achieving what he did in little more than forty-eight hours. His idea of leaving his box at the Français and greeting old friends in the lobby and artistes in the foyer was a brain-wave, and it did the trick. I always wonder if he remembered that on one of his first visits to Paris he went into the foyer to see Sarah and remained covered, as one

AUGUST 1927

does behind the scenes here. Sarah gently reminded him with, '*Monseigneur, ici on n'ôte pas sa couronne mais on ôte son chapeau.*' As soon as I can get a soiled or review copy I will buy the book and, remembering your honesty in these matters, will lend it you. Besides Mrs. Standish there must be very few left of the King's friends in Paris. Is it true that Mme. Le Grand does the fashions for one of the papers? Do you remember her delirious joy when the then Prince of Wales asked her to luncheon at Newmarket: '*Ces femmes de Paris en creveront.*'

5th August 1927

SHALL you see *Louise* when it is played for the 700th time as I see announced? Did your friend Mary Garden create the part? I am getting rather muddled about these things. I suppose *Louise* is the only opera in which the hero is not on the stage during the last act, and I have heard this was considered so derogatory to his dignity by the first representative of the part that he kept on throwing it up – or down – at rehearsal.

AUGUST 1927

Meanwhile, are you enjoying Vichy, and is it doing you good? I have not been there since the year after the War. I mean the Franco-German War, and remember nothing of it but extreme heat; my Grandmother eternally sipping waters for some imaginary complaint, and being treated to a rather sticky wafer out of a tombola which was called (I mean the wafer) a *plaisir*.

Lawrence's modesty has no limits. He has dropped the title of Colonel and is serving in the R.A.F. in India under another name which he sent in when he called at Buckingham Palace. Lord Stamfordham could not at first make out who was his caller but could not make enough of him as the bearer of a copy (unadulterated) of his book.

The Queen will go to Shotton this month. She clings ever more closely to this brother now that the other is so far away. Did you ever see the photographs of them as children, the four, one better looking than the other, looking over one another's heads like a sort of ladder?

26th *September* 1927

How much less enjoyment the wealthy get out of life than we paupers do. On Tuesday the B.s asked me to dine and go to see Pavlova, who is drawing crowded houses even in the 'off' season. A very 'rich' meal. Two Rolls-Royces came to convey five people to Covent Garden, and two boxes to contain us. I went round to see Pavlova at the end, so could not thank my host till I saw him next day, when I asked him what item in the evening's entertainment he had liked the best. 'Going home in the motor,' was the reply. Anna is really more wonderful than ever; age does absolutely nothing to dim her charm or diminish her incomparable art. It sounds like blasphemy to allude to her legs, but last night they seemed to make the legs of the corps de ballet look like the legs of a kitchen table. F. had luncheon there the other day, a curious but good meal, with an excellent vegetable 'pasty.' Afterwards the diva took him aside, told him she feared a mutual friend was in bad health, that he ought to winter in the South and might not have sufficient means. Would F. arrange the cash business without letting the friend know it came from her? Who shall say that she is not as benevolent – in the real sense of the word – as she is brilliant.

By the bye, Mrs. B., the American millionairess, is a very nice amiable woman, very slightly

painted and rather over-gowned (Worth), quite different to Mrs. C., who is very heavily painted and very under-gowned, except so far as the prices she must pay. Both are uneducated, but the former so simple that she says nothing to offend, and apparently does much to help without ostentation.

28th September 1927

WHAT rain! H. writes from Windsor that if the Cavalry had not been sent back from manœuvres, it would have required the Fleet to rescue them.

To the murder play at the Elephant and Castle on Saturday with N. F.; house packed; and many like ourselves shook with laughter all through. With all my experience I really did not know that melodrama could be so side-splitting, especially the more poignant portions of it.

How rude of J. to murmur about there being no meat at a Catholic's Friday *déjeuner*! As a rule well-bred Jews are so courteous and considerate as to Christian observances and their behaviour in one of our churches is always admirable.

M. has shown me an 'unbowdlerized' copy of *The Revolt in the Desert*. Lawrence is indeed '*quelqu'un*.'

Some time ago G. was seriously asked if he could suggest a millionaire who would give some rather fantastic price for one copy of the book not to be published till after the author's death; the opulent one would enjoy the knowledge that he alone had access to a mysterious volume which everyone else might want to read, but the gratification seemed a little disproportionate to the cash involved.

P.S. Who were the two girls of our day who, on account of their embonpoint, were dubbed Elephant and Castle?

15th October 1927

I HAVE enjoyed reading Burdett's *Gladstone*; he gives one a little shock by underrating a political giant's intellect, but explains – very usefully for this generation who knew not Gladstone – the effect of his amazing vitality and profound belief in the righteousness of whatever cause he took up. I wish he had said a little more of him as the Arch-Apostle of Liberty; five years more and the centenary of the Reform Bill will be with us. For good or ill, what a revolution, although a perfectly tranquil one, the century will mark.

DECEMBER 1927

Some of the professional usurers in London will, I suppose, migrate to Ireland where they can carry on their business undisturbed by Carson's provisions. The Moneylenders' Bill will anyhow abolish the moneylenders' tout, whose profession was almost on a par with that of a 'bully.' One of them who is now a shining, if not a rather flickering, light in the theatrical world, did the dirty on me for £50 which I have never recovered. I always wish we had a *conseil de famille* here; so many young men would be saved so much.

'So long' till the 22nd, when I shall be over.

26th December 1927

THANKS many for your card, and my sister's thanks for the chocolates. I never think any chocolate other than Marquis worth eating. And what finish every French shop gives to little things; each packet tied up with different coloured string.

I am having a very quiet Christmas here, where once it used to be so merry. Much fireside talk with my sister who can now talk about her boy without those stabs of pain which at first were almost intolerable. And paradoxical as it sounds,

the last sorrow has made the other a little easier to bear; she so firmly believes – and who would undeceive her – that she will see them both just as they were here. She has no fixed idea about the ‘glorified body’; perhaps the less theology, the more faith. As you know, this house is an old cottage, or rather two old cottages, pulled together, enlarged and with ‘modern conveniences,’ without spoiling its character. Here the dear boy grew up, spent all his school holidays in a rather old-fashioned style, and the War was the first call to take him away: so he seems to haunt every nook and corner of the place. My sister is never tired of speaking of your kindness at that time, and she wants you to read these verses which she has copied out and which somehow are a great happiness to her.

There’s a stir of youth in the Old House,
Whence the young life went West;
The new life in the red fields
Is lying with riven breast,
But its Spirit comes to the Old House:
Abroad it cannot rest.

There are quick feet on the creaking stairs:
The lilt of a laughing song
Lightens the gloom of the Old House,
And heals a bitter wrong. . . .
From Fields of War to Homes of Love
Short space when nights are long.

There are eager eyes in the Old House
That seek their own again;
Fingers that wake the lids of sleep
To dreams that are not in vain.
The Son returns to the Old House,
Though he sleeps among the slain.

She and I, who both lost what was most precious to us, are slowly beginning to look with less bitterness on all things German. One can anyhow think gently of those who fell, and those who suffered, in the War; one no longer echoes, as I fear at the time one did, the

'Vous qui voyez, Seigneur,
Leur âme jusqu'au fond,
Ne leur pardonnez pas,
Ils savent ce qu'ils font.'

Did you hear Sarah voice that terrible cry, more terrible even than Réjane's Carillon? Being a private, and obscure, individual, there is no necessity to do violence to one's feelings by associating with Germans any more than one need keep a dog if a dog has mortally bitten those whom you loved, but one feels now that one could willingly render any help to an individual German who needed it, or transact any necessary business arrangements with German folk. Of course the anti-German feeling which still exists, and far more generally than you may think, is not to be defended by any valid arguments; call it a human weakness, if you

JANUARY 1928

like, but anyhow, '*c'est plus fort que moi*,' and I can't banish it. I have no news for you; so am only giving you a bit of my mind with my best wishes that happy New Years are still in store for you.

30th January 1928

YES, it was evidently without strife or cry, and in the silence of the night, that Haig, most characteristically, brought the business of a very busy life to a quiet end. He may have had his limitations – the limitations of Scotsmen are generally evident – but finer soldier or firmer friend never stepped. It may sound silly, but I am sorry the War Office abolished the lance just before his death: he had such faith in the Cavalry arm that it must have cost him a pang. And he was loyalty incarnate; 'If only people would believe how absolutely loyal I am to Foch,' he said almost plaintively to G. at Montreuil one June day in 1918. His name will be written large in the pages of Military History as the man who led British troops to victory, but I like even better to think of him as the Soldiers' Friend. He never put any faith in L. G.'s Homes for Heroes which were to melt into

mirage before they could be approached, but he told the Government that he would accept nothing for himself until provision had been made for the men who had enabled him to win the War. The British Legion was his creature; Poppy Day was his institution, and there is no doubt that his labour of love shortened, if it did not actually cost him, his life. He may have gone through the War without a scratch, but in a sense it marked him no less gravely than the men wounded in the firing line, and I believe in the last weeks he felt as if a huge weight of fatigue were crushing him. I hope he will be laid to rest in the land he loved, which he would so much prefer to a military tomb in St. Paul's.

I suppose for one person who will remember that Lord Liverpool was Prime Minister in 1815, a million will tell you that the Duke of Wellington won Waterloo; so very likely a century hence, when Lloyd George and Clemenceau are forgotten, the names of Haig and Kitchener and Foch will be familiar to every schoolboy.

8th March 1928

I HAVE seen *Young Woodley* both at the Arts and the Savoy. The Lord Chamberlain hesitated about passing it, partly because he thought that, treated otherwise than with its present delicacy, the subject might conceivably be disagreeable, partly because he feared a deputation of public schoolmasters might wait on him to protest. Dickens, you will remember, was loudly assailed by individuals who thought they were being held up to obloquy in *Squeers*. To my mind the play is not only a very clever exhibition of stage craft but it preaches a very wholesome gospel, that parents, or guardians, must tell their children what's what before they send them away from home. In one line the father says: 'I have never been very intimate with my boy'; in other words, the motherless boy had been sent to school, as you and I were, without any sex knowledge. This, of course, is imparted in a most undesirable way by one's elder schoolfellows, and there results a sad confusion in the mind of a boy — or girl — as to what is nature and what is sin. It is almost unbelievable how this state of things existed fifty years ago: the beautiful Lady — told me that when she married at the age of eighteen, she did not know the difference between a man and a woman, and to mention a confinement in the presence of an almost grown-up girl was much

worse than the discussion of an unsavoury divorce case to-day. I do not defend the latter, but a moral Utopia is not created merely by huddling ugly things out of sight. Very young Lawton plays young Woodley with exquisite freshness and restraint and remarkable knowledge of his business, but the boy Jack Hawkins, who acts 'Charles, the friend,' makes so much out of a comparatively small part that I think he may eventually go the further of the two.

Did you see the wonderful Pitoeffs, or rather the wonderful Mrs. Pitoeff in *Heartbreak House*? I ask chiefly because I never quite understand whether the French appreciation of Shaw is genuine, and the temper of the audience might be a clue to this.

Is it true that Eve La Vallière was refused admittance into a convent, and if so, why? Louise de la Vallière was welcomed with open arms by the Carmelites, and what can be done for a repentant courtesan can surely be done for a repentant comédienne.

14th April 1928

As a Viceroy of India can now come home on leave, it is only fair that a High Commissioner of South Africa should do so; and the Athlones will get six months in England; I am told he badly needs rest, but, according to Smuts, South Africa badly wants him back again and to stay as long as possible; never was such popularity achieved and goodwill earned by sheer desire to do the right thing. The boy's death – such a handsome, high-spirited boy as he was – came as a fearful blow, all the worse for their being unable to go to him.

Has Paris recovered any of the money the Afghan so generously spent but did not pay? There is something to be said for discharging any bills they have 'overlooked' here, because we have delicate political relations with Afghanistan, and it might not be tactful to remind the ruler that he had a few small creditors in London, but Paris has no *quid pro quo* to set against Royal shoplifting. At the — Club, one of the belligerent enemy Princes left an account outstanding with the hall porter which the Committee had to make good.

19th *April* 1928

AFTER this last triplet of Garters it can never be said again that honour is dissociated from merit. It would be difficult to unfold in words what Athlone has done for South Africa; he is not clever in the restricted sense of the word; I believe he has no gift of oratory, and of course he has had no official training. Sheer force of character, perfect simplicity, utter selflessness, incapacity to harbour an ungenerous thought, and ingrained tact have conspired to make him – and his Royal Consort equally – so successful that Smuts writes to – saying it would be the happiest thing for South Africa if the pair could be induced to stay there indefinitely. Abercorn's Orange Protestantism is distasteful to many besides Roman Catholics in Ireland, but he has done – and is doing – a very difficult duty with consummate dignity lined with imperturbable good humour. Desborough combines in himself every good quality an Englishman is said to possess and has put them into effect. He adored his three sons and has lost them all; Julian was mortally wounded at Ypres in May 1915, and almost the only time Lord Kitchener was ever known to break down in office was when the news of Billy's death at Hooge came through; he had to leave off work for an hour to recover himself. Desborough carries on so bravely, and his Lady no less: but the blank must be dreadful.

M A Y 1928

I believe the King and Queen are going to the Final of the F.A. Cup. Somehow I don't visualize the Queen at a football match. Unless one understands the intricacies of the game, the contemplation for a couple of hours of the least attractive part of the human anatomy – which is what generally presents itself – is not very exhilarating.

Somehow Baron Culloden always suggests the Butcher, and one wishes there could have been a prettier Scotch title for Prince Henry. He must bitterly regret that he was just too young to measure swords with his German cousins.

1st May 1928

LESS than three years since George Curzon died and already the first volume of his life is out and the others I understand are well in hand. Ronaldshay seems to be doing his job with no less thoroughness than rapidity

One gathers that George Nathaniel clutched at celebrity from his cradle, and his childish pronouncements and undergraduate achievements were such that ninety pages are required before

J U N E 1928

he is launched on his adult career. But the pages are all so good, and Curzon is still so much in memory, that every one of them will be read. *Per contra*, the life of Joseph Chamberlain tarries. Fourteen years is a long spell and one's recollection of a contemporary statesman is apt to become a little blurred. The unkind story runs that the Chamberlain family after repeated inquiries as to how the author was getting on received lately a cheerful answer that the work was progressing excellently and that the first volume was already published, but as it was intended to build the book on a broad platform Mr. Joseph Chamberlain's own name did not occur in it! Oh dear! what a slump in Marylebone, and if Marylebone falters what seats may not fall altogether when a general election comes along!

I am so glad you will put in a full fortnight here.

29th June 1928

THE crustiest Tory never had a really bad word for Lincolnshire, even when he was outrageously Radical: he diffused good humour and happiness wherever he was or went: when he was

in his last illness, a great wish was that Robertson should accept the Colonelcy of the Blues, and fearing that economy might cause him to refuse, he sent a most delicately worded message as to defraying the expenses of the Gold Stick outfit. G. went with him to a theatre last summer and took him round to see the *jeune premier*, who could thereafter say that he had received in his dressing-room a man who had actually sat in Parliament with Lord Palmerston. How he and his wife adored that delightful boy, born out of due time. But they would do nothing to keep him back for an hour from the front, and when he was killed, he replied to Kitchener's heartfelt message of sympathy: 'We have nothing to regret, only to thank God for giving us so brave a son.'

What a holocaust of only sons there was in the War. Did not Doumer lose all four of his boys? Here, about the third year of the War, the Adjutant-General always tried to arrange that if two sons had been killed, the third should, if possible, be kept back. Queen Alexandra used to receive the most piteous appeals from mothers on this point which she urged as far as she could.

Mrs. Arthur James' raptures at being included in the Royal party for Ascot will only cease with her last breath; someone told her that since James II, no James of importance had been to the Castle. But countless acts of generous kindness, done almost by stealth, can be credited to her, and no one should grudge her any social triumph she may win.

JULY 1928

I suppose you have read *Poincaré* in French and will not trouble about the English translation: he certainly disposes with pitiless logic and irrefutable documentary evidence of any claim which Germany dares to adduce that France and Russia engineered the War; and it emerges pretty clearly that it was Austrian, not Russian, mobilization which led to the outbreak.

What about the Mestorino case? Crippen pales before this miscreant and Marshall Hall always believed that Crippen had given Mrs. C. an overdose of stuff to keep her quiet and only cut her up after death. I suppose there was this shadow of doubt as to Crippen, but here there seems none. Not even a *crime passionel*, only a *crime financier*. Were the jury really influenced by the sobs and cries of young Madame M.? If so, one is glad our twelve Englishmen or Englishwomen are not gifted with too much imagination, or prone to excessive emotion.

19th July 1928

THREE 'safe' seats retained by a reduced majority; is this the writing on the wall? Mean-

while, I hear that Worthington-Evans, who is a shrewd man of business and to whom Army estimates are child's play, is considering a suggestion – which his military advisers will probably discountenance – of abolishing the system of pay-day in the Army. The idea would be to institute regimental banks into which a soldier's weekly pay would be paid, just as an officer's pay is credited to him at Cox's. It is quite thinkable that many light-hearted subalterns, if they received a little packet of Treasury notes on Friday morning, might 'blew' the lot on a jolly; why should the soldier be exposed to an analogous temptation? It is certain that if his coins are jingling in his trouser pocket, his chum often asks for a loan which is difficult to refuse, and the ladies outside the barracks gates often get the lot out of him. And if the money were paid into a bank, all questions of stoppages would be more or less confidential, and this would add to his self-respect; the soldier would be encouraged to be thrifty, and a married man would take pride in putting by; of course the spendthrift would never have a penny to his credit, but the notion is to help the man who doesn't want to chuck his money about but is the victim of that easy-going, don't-argue-the-point tendency which characterizes the good-tempered Tommy (a nickname I detest though hallowed by Kipling). One knows that it is open to any man to put his money into a savings bank, but there is all the difference between having to

JULY 1928

put it there for himself and having it put there for him.

I fear we shall see our 'Ellen' no more. Lady S. said, 'Ellen Terry was never immoral, only sometimes illegal.' And anyhow she will be numbered among those to whom much will be forgiven because they have loved much.

24th July 1928

LITTLE WILLIE must have had a jerk when he applied for a police escort in Italy and was told that he might go where he pleased as he was only an ordinary tourist: last time he was in Naples he was with his father, who considered himself the arbiter of Italy's future. When the Kaiser and his Consort went to Rome for, I think, King Humbert's silver wedding, two great balls were given in their honour, and in both cases the hostess was an Englishwoman, Princess Doria and Duchess Sermoneta. I fancy in the last twenty years Italian nobles have crossed the Atlantic for their wives, or rather, the brides have come across the Atlantic to wed the nobles. Do you remember Alfred Rothschild's private secretary, Roche? It

JULY 1928

is his brother Raphael who is stirring up dust with his wholesale denunciation of doctors who, according to him, do not study medicine scientifically. Their father ran the French classes which every 'young lady' attended, accompanied by her own governess. Nowadays all the girls go to school, and what Dickens spoke of as the 'animal called governess' is going out of use. Poor soul – for about the wages of a present-day parlour-maid, she was expected to teach two foreign languages, music, drawing, as well as history, geography and arithmetic. How did people such as the Luynes and Noailles bring up their daughters? Did they go to school or were they practically uneducated like the English girl of our generation?

31st *July* 1928

THREE weeks without a drop of rain; like Egypt, i.e. Egypt before the Assouan Dam. But London dog days are worse than any Cairo summer, just as a winter in Florence is much colder than a winter in Folkestone. I think one ought to go to a hot climate in summer and a cold one

in winter and then circumstances adapt themselves to conditions.

Evan Charteris – a good choice – should indeed do justice to Gosse; he knew his subject well, the weaknesses as well as the outstanding merits, and he is diligent in research as well as easy with his pen. I hope he will remember Gosse's friendship with Lord Wolseley: Gosse was never happier than in those walks on the Sussex Downs when Wolseley gave such graphic stories of soldiering that the man of letters felt himself capable of the most daring military exploits, and of the honours that crowded upon Wolseley, none pleased him better than being numbered among the thirty authors who (I think on Thomas Hardy's suggestion) signed a letter of congratulation to George Meredith on his seventieth birthday. I don't think even heat and drought (the latter even browned the Buckingham Palace Garden) will drive me from London, anyhow till the middle of next month.

3rd August 1928

How I would like to see the defile through the Menin Gate next week; it is one of the occasions on which I would like to be 'Somebody.' I wonder to how many will occur a vision of D. H. riding along the Hooge road (as quietly as if he were on parade) in those awful autumnal days of 1914. Haig's spirit will surely hover over the proceedings, though he himself had but little appetite for occasions or any sort of demonstrations.

I was loafing one day in 1917 in the church at St. Omer and a good priest came up to me for a little gossip. He told me that when Louis XIV had won the battle of Cassel, he rode on horseback into the church to give thanks; did I think, he asked, that when Sir Douglas Haig had fairly beaten the Boche he would do the same thing? I said I would have the matter submitted to the Commander-in-Chief, but I was rather doubtful as to whether he would agree. Can you picture D. H., who was simplicity incarnate and always shrank from the limelight, prancing on horseback into a place of worship and playing the leading part in a very ornate religious ceremonial?

Has a Pope ever resigned office and retired into private life as the Archbishop of Canterbury is going to do? Only I suppose it will be somehow arranged for him to sit in the Lords. Did you ever

hear of the proselytizing priest who, when preaching to a congregation which he believed to include many Anglicans, wound up his discourse with: 'And now, dear brothers and sisters, you must choose between the Holy Father, the Pope, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, with his wife'?

21st August 1928

I HOPE the French are saying kind things of Haldane; they ought to be truly thankful to him, for it was he who made it possible to send across the Channel, with a few days' notice, a self-contained force of superfine quality equipped to the last button, and it was no other than he who prevailed on Asquith and Grey to let the French and English Staffs discuss what should be done if Germany threw down the glove. A rather ugly Press campaign was started against him in the first weeks of the War, and Kitchener sent word to Shoe Lane that this must stop. If Haldane neglected his duty, he said, let that be inquired into after the War; for the moment his services and his brain were of paramount value, and nothing should be written in the newspapers

which would impede his coming to the War Office to advise on military jurisdiction and other matters. Bonar Law, the instigator of the campaign, to whom the representation was made, coolly replied that the War could not last many months, that politics would then resume their former importance, and the anti-Haldane cry would be an important asset to his Party. I don't quite know what measures Kitchener then took, but they must have been pretty drastic, as after a couple of days there was no further murmur against Haldane publicly expressed.

I wonder who will get the two vacant O.M.'s. Of the lot created by King Edward in 1902, only one now remains. Did you read *The Times* article as to the extreme poverty of clerical stipends in Spain? I suppose one of those chasubles – with perhaps a cope thrown in – would keep a thrifty priest for a considerable period. I wonder what is the total value of Spanish ecclesiastical garments; I was quite dazzled with the gorgeousness of drawerful after drawerful pulled out for one's inspection in the different sacristies.

I suppose we must accept the Hungarian couple who lived to be 172 and 164. I am still here, but go to Shropshire at the end of the week. By the way, when you write, tell me if in France 'holidays of obligation' have been cut down to four.

25th *September* 1928

I ALWAYS like being here in autumn rather than in spring or summer. It fits in better with all one's memories and it is not to be morbid to think without regrets that another year is drawing to a close. Life is still brimful of interesting people and things – especially the latter – but one's grip on it, if still firm, is quite perceptibly, and quite easily, slackening.

I went to Chester two days ago; St. Werburgh, forgotten for so many centuries, has come into her own again with the revival of Catholic doctrine and practice in the Cathedral. *Laus Deo* – but also all credit to Stephen Paget, who is more than worthy of his brother of Oxford: strange that two such distinguished Divines should spring from a great Surgeon.

Think of Chester Cathedral (and many others to-day) with their daily Eucharists, their Chapels in which the Holy Mysteries are constantly celebrated, the Mission Services, linked up to Missionary work overseas, the pithy, practical and not too frequent sermons, and compare with the record of five communicants at St. Paul's Cathedral on Easter Day well on in the last century, with long Cathedral aisles deserted and generally railed off like tombs: how could Lord John Russell write that the 'Tractarian clergy were leading their flocks step by step to the very verge

of the precipice'? And apart from the right and wrong of the matter, how could he be so purblind as to 'stuff up' Queen Victoria with the promise that the Oxford Movement would be dead within thirty years? Dean Stanley, unorthodox though he were, was much more farseeing when he reported to Bishop Tait that at St. Alban's, Holborn, he had 'seen three men in green and it would be difficult to put them down.' It always seems so odd that whereas Disraeli was of the world worldly and the prime promoter of the Bill to put down ritual, it was through reading *Sybil* that Lord Leigh was reminded of his duty to his tenants in the slums of Holborn, and this, if indirectly, led to the building of St. Alban's. We keep very early hours here and I am gently reminded that, albeit only ten o'clock, it is 'nearly bedtime.'

8th October 1928

LORD OXFORD'S *Memoirs* go to prove what I have so often told you, that the French-Northcliffe-Repington intrigue over the 'got-up' shells shortage had nothing to do with the Prime Min-

OCTOBER 1928

ister asking his colleagues to place their portfolios at his disposal. A letter from Bonar Law brought to a head the determination he had formed, which he confided to Kitchener, that the War could not be carried on by a party Government.

15th October 1928

I *have* seen a film being made; I went at 2 a.m. to Waterloo Station to see the Underground film being made, and this can only be done in the hour when trains are not running. The 'villain' is a friend of mine and he insisted on my being taken in a group with him and, hating the moving staircase as I do, I found myself going up and down on it literally *ad nauseam*. Lady Oxford in a short tight black skirt (the modern equivalent for widow's weeds) had come to mark her son's undoubted talent as a maker of pictures, and to feed his friends with wonderful cold foods.

4th November 1928

Do you know how many Medailles Militaires and Croix de Guerres were given in the War? Of course neither is anything like the equivalent of our Victoria Cross, of which a list of awards has just been made. I am glad to see that the Grenadiers got eleven, and the Coldstream ten. Naturally the R.A. topped the list, but they are numerically ten times stronger than any other formation. If we ever go to war again the V.C. will surely be given to women, and many of them deserved it this time. I don't know if Queen Victoria would have approved of this. When the V.C. was instituted, she told the War Secretary that persons decorated with it should have some distinctive mark, but that V.C. would not do; she suggested D.V.C., Decorated with Victoria Cross, or B.V.C., Bearer of the Victoria Cross, but her suggestion was obviously overruled. When she herself gave the first lot after the Crimea, she wrote something sentimental about it being the first occasion on which the soldier's rough hand had touched his Sovereign's; unless she shook hands with them, which was not likely, this was scarcely accurate, as she could only have pinned the Crosses on their breasts.

16th November 1928

'*De mortuis nil*' of course, but I have a sneaking respect for the men who dashed in Combes' nose; he was so aggressively anti-Clerical, with all the zeal of a mediæval Inquisitor, and so brutally hostile to religion that I cannot be surprised that people with any religious feelings resented his bust being put up, especially at Caen where there are special, if rather irregular, Christian traditions. Has Clemenceau become a little softer with old age? His digestion must be better even than old Harry Chaplin's if at eighty-seven his favourite meal is onion soup and sausages. Poincaré so rightly said of him in 1915 that while things go fairly well, Clemenceau is capable of spoiling everything; when things go very badly, he may be the only man capable of saving France. *Au fond* Georges' life must have been a sad one for him to say: '*J'avais une femme, elle m'a trompée; j'avais des enfants, ils m'ont quittés; j'avais des amis, ils m'ont trahis, il reste mes ongles et je griffe.*' Is he ever seen about now?

21st November 1928

EVERYONE rather perturbed by the announcement that the King is ill; one had heard that he was not well and had insisted on going over to Appleton one day when he had already caught a cold. The King hates secretiveness, so he may have insisted on letting the public know that he is laid up. When he had his bad accident in France in 1915 Kitchener urged that it should be kept out of the papers until he was safely back, but Buckingham Palace would not agree to this. The result was unfortunate as spies found out where the King was staying and aeroplanes had to guard the Château for four days, during which French was almost beside himself with anxiety. I am sure almost everybody in Paris will watch the bulletins nearly as eagerly as ourselves. Do you remember them as Prince and Princess of Wales going to tea with Baroness Alphonse (in the spring of 1908?), and the Princess pointing out to him from the window the scenes of the Royal martyrdoms and insisting on his tasting the cherries? I believe that was about the only week's amusement the King has ever had in Paris; how different to King Edward! By the bye, when next you write, tell me when Granier last acted; do you ever go to see her now, and does she 'show her age,' which must be considerable? And what is the French for 'talkies' – an odious word which

has installed itself here and is nearly as bad as "phone"? Our friend Childs' departure from Scotland Yard is due not to huff but to (perhaps misplaced) loyalty to his ex-Chief; his language is as flowery as ever.

I cannot come over next month but, humanly speaking, I am sure to do so early in January, when I must do all the plays, anyhow those which you recommend.

26th *November* 1928

WILL a 'Princess of France' change her religion when she marries a Prince of the Orthodox Church? Prince Christopher's first wife was 'converted' from whatever religion Americans profess. Those one sees over here never seem to me to practise any. I suppose as the Duc de Guise is head of the house, the bride is a Princess of France.

I wonder if Lincolnshire's daughters tossed up as to which of their husbands should fill the office of Lord Great Chamberlain during this reign; I suppose they had a sort of equal right to it: perhaps Lewisham will give way to his eldest son

when he comes of age, as Fitzalan will resign the Earl Marshalship to Norfolk.

You are sure to read *The Life and Tragedy of the Empress of Russia*; send me your comments on it. I remember her as a six-year-old child playing in the Orangery at Darmstadt: if she could have died when they were all stricken with diphtheria, what misery might have been saved her. Whatever her errors of judgment, they have been washed out in blood and tears.

Read also *The Tragedy of King Edward* – rather a misleading title as nobody had a keener sense of enjoyment, which lasted to the end. But what he suffered, without murmur, under the repression of Queen Victoria is well, and wisely, brought out.

I believe Lady Curzon won over the Cesarewitch, but she is generous and the money will run through her fingers. I had to listen last night to an interminable – and rather heated – discussion as to what weight one horse ought – or ought not – to have given to another in the Cambridge-shire, and I was reminded of Dizzy's description of a dinner where the conversation began with handicaps and odds, and ended with odds and handicaps. Of course, living where you do, you backed Palais Royal.

11th December 1928

I DO not remember in all my experience as a playgoer having been kept awake by a play; but last night I saw *Journey's End* given by the Stage Society, and I could not sleep for hours; all day long I have been asking myself the reason why. *Journey's End* is a thing by itself: suffering and death are about, but fun and laughter often prevail. Of story there is little, of love interest less; thirty-six hours in a dug-out, the characters quite ordinary soldiers – most of them 'for-the-period' soldiers – no picturesque exhibition either of German hate or English heroism, no very thrilling event on the stage except the death of the lately joined boy at the end, so beautifully enacted that it was almost robbed of its sadness, though it gave the final tug to one's heart-strings.

Yet the writer – a simple kindly fellow whose name is hitherto unknown to anyone – has managed to convey an idea, to represent an episode, with a force and a fidelity for which in modern drama I do not easily find a parallel. Drama, I believe, means action, and *Journey's End* is action throughout; a progress with almost mechanical precision from cause to effect, but a progress so entirely human that all sense of theatre is absent.

There will be some to say that the reality of the play may make it intolerable to those – like myself – whose hearts were torn from their breasts

by the War; others may think it undesirable to represent a British officer either as a coward or as something dangerously near a drunkard. Probably both these characters were true to type, because the one man was finally to overcome a weakness to which anyone might be prone, and the other, despite his addiction to the whiskey bottle, remains the resolute and adored leader of his men. And I think that those of us who mourn our 'unreturning brave' will get crumbs of comfort from the reminder that despite all the squalor and the dirt, the blood and agony, there was good humour and good comradeship throughout, and that the joy of life was not wholly quenched even in the firing-line; as one has seen for oneself, comedy and tragedy are closely interlaced in war, and mirth mocks at the heels of misery. The author was, I believe, all through those black weeks of 1918; he knows what he is writing about, and in some almost uncanny way he hangs before us the truest and the most haunting picture of the War that is likely to be made.

Olivier, an ex-choirboy of All Saints, Margaret Street, plays the lead, but there is really no lead, as each character stands out like a cameo, yet each fits with equal value into the simplest and most suitable frame.

20th December 1928

I HOPE Christmas will have some measure of brightness for you; I think you spend it at V — ; here all is gloom; people still throng the Palace gates, and everyone opens his morning paper with trembling finger, fearing to read the dreaded news; but one is hoping on, and things are certainly better than they were a few days ago. The King may not have made the same appeal as his parents did to popular imagination, but the whole country sets a very real value on his work and worth, and one feels that his life is bound up with England's welfare. I hope that every time you pass the Georges V (tube or street) you breathe a little prayer for him.

You will miss Arthur Paget at Cannes if you go there in the Spring; he never quite recovered not being actively employed in the War. He went on one or two missions, his errand to Sir John was distinctly useful, but he wanted to fight and could not realize it was a young man's war. All Pagets are imbued with the idea that the sun was made to shine on them, and that a war should rage for four years without his taking a forward part in it, was for A. P. quite unthinkable.

I agree with you about *Elizabeth and Essex*; a wonderful bit of literature, but Strachey not quite so much at his ease with them as with his Victorian figures; perhaps he was a little *too*

JANUARY 1929

much at his ease with some of the latter. But what a writer!

10th January 1929

Yes, at the Little Theatre I saw the Queen of Spain and Princess Beatrice in the stalls. A Queen on the 'floor' of the house seems a contradiction in terms, but I don't think anyone recognized her, or anyhow no one stared at her. She was beautifully dressed, looked beautiful, and her care for her mother is so delightful to note. H. M. evidently appreciated *Diversion*, in which I thought Van Druten had gone one better than in *Young Woodley*, though it was evidently not such a good box office proposition. Cathleen Nesbitt gave a perfect presentation of the cocotte who is 'bad' simply because she has no sense of right and wrong. Also a young actor – Maurice Evans – of whom I had never heard – gave an admirable piece of acting. Wonderful technique, with sincerity and a voice of the same timbre as Forbes Robertson. I don't quite know how he did the throttling of his inamorata. In *Fédora* Berton always put one hand inside the other so that

when he was apparently squeezing Sarah's throat, he was really only pressing on his own palm. I wonder how many people in the theatre remembered that they were in what was once Coutts Bank with its wonderful register of royal and aristocratic accounts.

1st *February* 1929

THE double Durham death duties (what alliteration!) will deal a smashing blow even to that rich estate. It may mean the sale of many things, perhaps even 'Master Lambton' which, for some reason, is now spoken of as 'The Red Boy'. Perhaps the opulent American who bought the 'Blue Boy' will buy this and hang them on opposite walls. Have the Rothschilds any good Lawrence? I think when they were buying their Gainsborough and Reynolds, Lawrence had not quite come into his own. Lord Durham, however straitened, will still be well off. When Harcourt brought in the Death Duties, the late Duke of Devonshire said that the real victims would not be the great territorial magnates. These, even if they had to give up their country estates, would

FEBRUARY 1929

have enough to live on and could enjoy life in London or elsewhere. But the real unadulterated country gentleman who spends his money locally and has few interests outside his county would be a cruel sufferer if he had to close down. This forecast is coming true, and it looks very much as if not only the great landlords but also the good old-fashioned squires would die out. God help them and the people who have looked up to, and have been cared for by, them.

3rd *February* 1929

LOOKING back along the avenues of your own experience, to whom do you allot the palm for beauty? I say Lady Dudley every time, and she has died as beautifully as she lived, just faded away with beauty scarcely dimmed and wholly unblurred. And what a life! To be married at eighteen, and for nearly twenty years to be loaded with jewels, satiated with luxury, and given anything and everything except what I suppose every woman covets, some measure of responsibility and some freedom of action. Then the old man suddenly failed in mind, and she became the

woman of business, and so long as he lived, the devoted nurse, only leaving his side to look after his interests, and to care for little else except her duty to her children, to whom she has throughout been a devoted mother. Forty years ago one has so often been in a ballroom and seen all those lovely women, vying with one another in looks, and then Lady Dudley would sweep in and make the whole lot look just a little, I won't say cheap, but on a lower level than herself. Her Red Cross work was, I believe, of really remarkable value. In the War, as she knew, there were many who would look after the soldiers, so she worked specially for the disabled and wounded officers, many of whom were in narrower circumstances than the men, and to whom she was nothing less than a mother, and of whom she never lost sight so long as she had strength to work at all. I believe the King urged her to accept some decoration, but she prayed to be excused; she had done all she could and wanted nothing in return, so different to many of the B.E.'s. She had, of course, outlived her generation, but somehow I don't think she will be quickly forgotten.

Is there some big broadcasting scheme being hatched in Paris? For some reason L. has written to ask me to name the most important English author; I have replied, at the moment Galsworthy. Personally I think Kipling will live much longer, but just now Galsworthy is more in

MARCH 1929

evidence. To my infinite shame I have never been able quite to get on terms with the *Forsyte Saga*.

21st March 1929

So the great soldier has surrendered at last, but only into the hands of the Captain whom he trusted always – and altogether. The papers say that his last words were '*Allons y'*': and without irreverence one may make a shrewd guess as to where he, who was a Christian and a gentleman no less than a soldier, has gone. It is curious to think that whereas before the war French officers were pounced on – to say the least of it – if they practised their religion, France has been led to victory by four devout Catholics and one ardent Protestant, for one must not rule Nivelle out of the list: his sortie from Verdun was a fine epilogue to Pétain's defence of it and that is surely an epic. Certainly political winds whistled in Foch's teeth, and one shudders to think where, but for Clemenceau's insistence, he might have been when the War broke out. Then, of course, nothing could have kept him back whatever his starting point. I suppose his admiration for the

M A R C H 1929

British soldier, which was genuine, began when he came over for manœuvres in 1912. The two things which struck him were the keenness of the officers and the pace of the infantry in attack. Someone told him the latter might be due to the system of regimental sports, to which Foch agreed, but added it would be impossible to have them in French regiments as if the Colonel were beaten in any event, it would be subversive of discipline. The last time I saw him he said he could not have his Memoirs published till after his death: there would be too much recrimination. '*Tout le monde, par exemple, a gagné la bataille de la Marne, excepté Joffre.*' I hope the Prince of Wales will go to the funeral: a British Sovereign cannot pay too great an honour to the man who led British troops by the million to victory.

27th March 1929

MANY thanks for your description of yesterday's ceremony; your letter was delivered 'express' – how convenient it is. Yes, indeed, Foch may well have sighed, 'Enfin, un peu de silence,' when the door closed on him at the

Invalides. Do you know that until he went over for the funeral Lord Methuen had not slept in Paris since he did so on his way to carry a despatch to Lord Lyons at Bordeaux in 1871. I shall always like to remember that, just before his last illness, Foch said to Lhopital: '*J'ai la conscience d'avoir servi l'Angleterre comme si elle avait été mon pays.*' Poor Lhopital, he rushed from the Marshal's bedside to see his dying father and arrived too late, and rushed back to Paris to find his beloved Chief had just passed away. I hear Mme. Foch has told the Government that she 'wants nothing.'

One could say of Lady Cambridge – like Amabel in *The Heir of Redclyffe* – that she seemed to have gone a little way with her adored husband when he died, and only to have been brought back for a little while. There was never any exhibition of grief – perhaps because she was so entirely selfless – but one felt that a spring had been broken which would only be mended when the two would be together again. All through her girlhood circumstances conspired to spoil her, but she was one of those characters which are wholly unspoilable. In her married life husband, children, friends and even horses and dogs all had to be carefully considered, but she never seemed to have any consideration for herself, even when towards the end she was very very tired. She was a perfect horsewoman, yet if riding were mentioned, she would always talk about the skill

APRIL 1929

of somebody else and discouraged the slightest allusion to herself. How she hated the Germans, or rather their 'Prussianism,' but she always had a soft spot in her heart for Austrians, perhaps because of her happy experience in Vienna, when he was Military Attaché, and a very good one. God rest her well – no braver, brighter spirit ever passed into His keeping. This is not really a sad letter, because the death of people who have lived so bravely has not any real ring of sadness.

Easter Tuesday 1929

I WENT to St. Alban's on Sunday: very beautiful, but somehow I preferred the St. Alban's of my boyhood, and in the sermon my thoughts went back and rested with one of Stanton's Easter sermons: 'She supposing Him to be the gardener.'

I am irritated – perhaps not the right word or feeling – by the introduction at one or two churches of the first Easter Eucharist on the morning of Easter Evé. To my mind it is illogical, no less than unhistorical, and, in a sense, cuts a little way across the greatest of all Christian

JUNE 1929

truths. I believe the liturgiologists of your faith speak of it as an anachronism and do not seek to defend seriously what seems little else than a fad. Yes, I would have loved to hear the *Pange Lingua* at Ste. Sulpice. Does old M. Vidor still play the organ there? I hear that, despite his age, he makes an excellent husband and is goodness itself to Mrs. Standish.

You know, I suppose, that some Pope foolishly altered the *Prælium* into *Lauream* making 'Sing my tongue the glorious laurels' instead of 'glorious battle.' Mr. Gladstone, who really understood hymnology, put *Pange Lingua* second to 'Praise to the Holiest,' which was his favourite hymn.

28th June 1929

WHAT will be the outcome of the experts' report on Reparations? I am not an expert, but I remember that Germany bullied Denmark in 1863 and Austria in 1866, that by means of a faked telegram she invaded France in 1870 and squeezed all the gold she could out of her, and that fifteen years ago she violated Belgium and

again strode over France, dealing death and destruction wherever she went. Prussia has indeed waded through blood to avenge the peach which Louise peeled and Napoleon refused; so much for History, and one waits to hear what Equity has to say.

I heard from an authority on medical research a fact which startled me and I think will startle you; – within a short period it will be computed that, owing to knowledge – medical and surgical – directly derived from the war, more British lives have been saved since 1918 than were lost in those four years of fighting. Also that whereas five years ago Germany was far ahead of other countries in medical research, England and France have now quite outstripped her.

The Guitrys went down to Windsor and were shown over the State apartments and others, by the Lord-in-Waiting and given tea by the Lady of the Bedchamber. They were in raptures over the pictures, they raved over the china, they greatly appreciated the privilege accorded to them, and they made themselves everything that could be charming.

Plumer is a Viscount. Nobody would have rejoiced more over his promotion than Haig, who was always insistent that 'Plum' should have entire credit for the blow up at Messines.

17th July 1929.

FRENCH appreciation of English acting is well worth having, as they do understand the theatre even if they don't often go to it. I am so glad the De — thought *Journey's End* 'wonderful,' and so sorry you missed seeing it. I have seen it four times and am more impressed each time. Certainly our standard of male acting is very high just now. Guitry said to me not long ago that the one thing they lack on the French stage is the really young actor, of whom we have an abundance. I suppose military service rather cuts across the life of the young Frenchman, but also as soon as he ceases to be an *écolier* he becomes a *petit jeune homme* and loses the freshness which the English 'boy' generally retains through his twenties. You hardly ever see a really boyish performance on the French stage: in London it happens constantly; but I suppose, despite the remarkable improvement there last year, the theatre in Paris is still ahead of us. The French have supremely the gift of imagination in which we are rather lacking.

I generally read the *Figaro* and I am always struck by the friendly encouraging notices given to a new play; the writer sticks to his subject, criticises sharply where criticism is just and gives full credit for what is good; he never attempts to show off his own knowledge, which our people

here are so fond of doing. Very often in London papers the notices of a first night are largely made up of the writers' epigrams, while the attempt to turn or rather force a smart phrase is painfully evident. And their faint, and rather sneering, praise is often worse than their blame because it cannot be parried. At times one would almost think that our dramatic critics believe that their first duty is to humble the actors, and their second to prevent the public going to see the play; *per contra*, whenever I read of a *première* in Paris I almost always think I would like to see the piece. After all the theatre is an industry, the artists are usually very industrious, and lightly to deprive them of their work, which is so often the result of a bad notice, seems so very hard in these hard times. Of course nothing could be worse than indiscriminate praise, but what is good in the play or performance should be generously underlined.

Armistice Day 1929

EACH year that 'Two Minutes' Silence is more and more eloquent; so many claim to have first thought of it, but whoever is responsible for

putting it into effect deserves our undying gratitude.

I saw a performance of *The Unknown Warrior* at the Haymarket this afternoon; the theatre was ablaze with Royalties headed by the Queen of Spain, who afterwards told the artists that residence in a Latin country enabled her to appreciate all the play meant. I think that only those who spent the years of blood and agony face to face with the Huns can appreciate all the agony of the boy who came home to bitter disappointment and went back to die. Evans gave a beautiful rendering of the Warrior, and his youth made the cry 'I want to come back' all the more poignant. Was there not an ugly demonstration when the play was given in Paris? Of course it offends against that sense of '*autorité paternelle*' which, I believe, is still strong in France and which here has given place to a sort of mutual confidence between father and son. Paternal authority may have weakened with the emancipation of youth, but a feeling of trust has succeeded to it, and, as an Englishman, it seemed to me that the boy's bitterness in the last Act is because he thinks the father has been unfaithful to that trust. The proceeds were divided between English and French Children's Hospitals, so anyhow '*Vive l'Entente.*'

G. told me that he saw Lloyd George gazing at the Kitchener statue this morning and, he thought, with tears in his eyes; perhaps now the

NOVEMBER 1929

one understands, and one is sure the other forgives. There were some beautiful wreaths and flowers laid on the steps; the man lived and died for his country and I don't think the country forgets.

I am looking forward so eagerly to our Algiers; life has been very drab as well as rather strenuous lately, and one hungers for the sun, so *à bientôt*.

INDEX

- ABBAS HILMY, 172
 Abercorn, Duke of, 224
 Acheson, Viscount, 158
 Aga Khan, the, 154
 Aherne, Brian, 186
 Ainley, Henry, 78, 151
 Albany, Duke of, 164
 Albert, King, 22, 72
 Alcester, Lord, 143
 Alexandra, Queen, 16, 34, 46, 48, 59,
 77, 82, 93, 113, 170, 206, 227
 Alfonso, King, 9
 Allenby, Field-Marshal Lord, 159
 Anastasie, Grand Duchess, 106
 Ancaster, Lord, 99
 Anderson, Mary, 67
 Asquith, Hon. Anthony, 238
 Asquith, Mr. (Earl of Oxford), 34, 54,
 81, 110, 153, 171, 185, 202, 207,
 234, 237
 Asquith, Mrs. (Countess of Oxford), 94,
 143, 153, 182, 238
 Astley, Sir John, 123
 Athlone, Earl of, 223-4
 Aynsworth, Allan, 102

 BALDWIN, MR., 140, 143
 Baldwin, Mrs., 175
 Balfour, Lord, 44, 170, 182, 200
 Bancroft, Lady, 162
 Bancroft, Sir Squire, 50, 192
 Bankhead, Tallulah, 173
 Barnes, Bishop, 164
 Barnes, George N., 126
 Barrie, Sir James, 81
 Barrington, Eric, 210
 Bartet, 162
 Battenberg, Prince Henry of, 129
 Battenberg, Prince Louis of, 137
 Beaconsfield, Lord, *see* Disraeli
 Beatrice, Princess, 16, 129, 247
 Beauchamp, Lady, 177
 Beauregard, Comtesse de, 194
 Beit, Sir Alfred, 50
 Belasco, David, 63
 Bentincks, the, 89
 Bernhardt, Sarah, 122, 144-5, 152,
 210-11, 218, 248
 Bertier, Gen., 158
 Berton, 247
 Best, Edna, 173
Betrothal, The, 101
 Birdwood, Field-Marshal, 83, 172, 176
 Birkenhead, Lord, 14, 15, 50, 52, 69,
 110, 149, 167, 183, 193
 Birley, Oswald, 95
 Blücher, Gen., 68
Blue Bird, The, 101
 Bodley, J. E. C., 134
 Brade, Sir Reginald, 15
 Braithwaite, Lillian, 167
 Briand, Aristide, 41, 46, 127, 128
 Brice, Miss, 175
 Brodrick, St. John, 170
 Brooke, Victor, 114
 Brulé, André, 110
 Bülow, Prince, 146
 Burdett, Osbert, 215
 Burnaby, Col., 195
 Byard, Theo., 179
 Byard, Mrs., 193
 Byng, Lord, 94, 135

 CADELL, JEAN, 79
 Caillaux, 172
 Caillaux, Mme., 172
 Cambon, Jules, 10
 Cambon, Paul, 27, 33, 98
 Cambridge, Duke of, 132
 Cambridge, Lady, 252
 Cambridge, Lady Helena, 66
 Cambridge, Lord, 164
 Canterbury, Archbishop of, 139, 143,
 233
 Carisbrooke, Marquess of, 82
 Carpentier, Georges, 83, 110, 154
 Carson, Lord, 216
 Cassel, Sir Ernest, 121-2
 Castellane, Boni de, 187
 Castelnau, General, 81-2
 Castelnau, Madame de, 81-2
 Castiglione, Mme., 88, 209
 Cavan, Lord, 57
 Cavell, Edith, 84, 185
 Cecil, Lord, 83
 Chamberlain, Sir Austen, 167, 191
 Chamberlain, Joseph, 226
 Chaplin, Lord, 240

INDEX

Charles I, 135
 Charles II., 49
 Charteris, Hon. Evan, 232
 Charteris, Hugo, 170
 Cherwode, Gen. Sir Philip, 135
 Childs, Sir Wyndham, 242
 Chimay, Princess Caraman, 209
 Christian, Princess, 16
 Christopher, Prince, 242
 Churchill, Lady Randolph, 105
 Churchill, Winston, 14, 76, 83, 159, 207
Circle, The, 102
 Clarence, Albert Victor, Duke of, 53-4
 Clayton, John, 79
 Clemenceau, 24, 47, 166, 220, 240, 253
 Cobham, Sir Alan, 188
 Coburg, Duke of, 164
 Coghlan, Charles, 180
 Combes, 240
 Connaught, Duke of, 47, 104, 164, 166, 203
 Constantine, King, 34, 36
 Cooper, Gladys, 101, 114, 162
 Cowans, Sir John, 105-7
 Cowle, Jane, 195
 Coyne, Joseph, 106
 Craven, Lady Mary, 88
 Crawford, Lord, 105
 Creedy, Sir Herbert, 120
 Crichton, Col. Harry, 60
 Crippen, 228
 Culloden, Baron, 225
 Cumberland, Duke of, 164
 Curzon, Marchioness, 174
 Curzon, Marquess, 93, 110, 126, 136, 151-2, 155, 170, 174, 225-6
Cymbeline, 144
 DAVIDSON, ARCHBISHOP, 139, 233
 Davies, Ben, 90
 Davies, Gen. Sir Francis, 115
 Dawnay, Hugh, 20, 130
 Dean of Westminster, 59
 D'Egville, 113
 Delcassé, 34
 Derby, Lady, 27
 Derby, Lord, 48, 81
 Derby, Lord (Prime Minister), 118
 Desborough, Lord and Lady, 224
 Deschanel, 79
 De Valera, 112
 Devonshire, the late Duke of, 121, 248
 Dick, Reid, 153
 Dickens, Charles, 182, 221, 231
Diplomacy, 161
 Disraeli, 123, 237, 243
 Dmitri, Grand Duke, 21
 Dolling, Father, 202

Dora, 162
 Doria, Princess, 230
Dorothy, 90
 Doubleday, 152, 168
 Doubleday, Mrs., 168
 Doumer, President, 227
 Doumergue, President, 172, 205
 Du Barry, Mme., 54
 Dudley, Lady, 194, 249-50
 Dudley, Lord, 194
 Dumayrou, 32
 Dunraven, Lord, 126
 Dunsany, Lord, 113
 Durham, Lord, 248
 Duse, 144-5
 ECKHARDSTEIN, 120-1
 Edward VII, King, 12, 36, 61-2, 66, 72, 112, 120-1, 143, 146, 155, 163, 181, 189-90, 192, 203, 210-11, 241, 243
 Eglinton, Lord, 104
 Elgar, Sir Edward, 163
 Eltham, Lady, 163
 Emery, Winifred, 173
 Eugénie, Empress, 75-6, 97, 208
 Evans, Edith, 180
 Evans, Maurice, 247
 FABER, FATHER, 116
 Fairborough, Sydney, 79
Fallen Angels, 173
 Farquhar, Lord, 152
 Feisal, Emir, 83
 Fergusson, Gen. Sir Charles, 115
 Fitzalan, Lord, 243
 Fitzgerald, Col., 101, 114
 Fitzroys, the, 49
 Fleming, Canon, 53
 Fleury, 97
 Foch, Mme., 252
 Foch, Marshal, 47, 49, 65-6, 68, 75, 98, 147, 166, 178, 207-8, 219-20, 251-3
Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, The, 67
 Francis of Teck, Prince, 41
 French, Sir John (Lord Ypres), 15, 16, 21, 25, 64, 78, 80, 109, 135, 177, 237, 241, 246
 Frere, Bishop, 74
 Frere, Sir Bartle, 181
 GAINSBOROUGH, 248
 Gallifet, Mme de, 209
 Galsworthy, John, 250
 Garden, Mary, 211
 Garrick, 50
 Gatty, Charles, 122-3
 Geddes, Sir Eric, 71, 131-2

INDEX

- Genée, Adeline, 85
 George III, King, 111, 164
 George IV, King, 122
 George V, King, 13-16, 22, 26, 41, 43-5,
 47, 49, 52, 58-60, 62, 65, 68, 70,
 72, 78, 85, 93, 94, 110-13, 115, 132,
 143, 146, 163, 171-2, 176-7, 182,
 201, 210-11, 225, 241, 246, 250
 Gilbert, Sir W. S., 144
 Gladstone, 125, 133, 143, 146, 150, 152,
 164, 171, 205, 215, 255
 Gladstone, Mrs., 38, 175
 Glanely, Lord, 118
 Gleichen, Count, 130
 Gleichen, Lady Feo, 129
 Gordon, Gen., 45
 Gore, Bishop, 56, 127
 Gosse, Sir Edmund, 169, 189, 192, 196,
 200, 204-5, 232
 Gouraud, Col., 195-6
 Grafton, Duke of, 49
 Granier, 241
 Granville, Lord, 96
 Greece, Prince George of, 34
 Gregory, of the Foreign Office, 133
 Grenfell, Hon. Julian, 224
 Grenfell, Hon. William, 224
 Grey, Lady, 169
 Grey, Lady de, 41
 Grey, Miss, 78
 Grey of Falloden, Lord, 33, 71, 98, 234
 Grierson, Gen., 13
 Guedalla, Philip, 192, 204
 Guise, Duc de, 9, 242
 Gutrys, the, 122, 165-6, 179, 195, 256-7
- HAGGARD, COL., 130
 Haig, Field-Marshal, 48-9, 55-6, 62, 86,
 97, 116, 126, 130, 132, 147, 198,
 219-20, 233, 256
 Haig, Lady, 55
 Haldane, Lord, 9, 42, 200, 204-5, 207,
 234
 Halifax, Lord, 184
 Hall, Marshall, 228
 Hamilton, Lord Claud, 170
 Hamilton, Maj.-Gen. Hubert, 114
 Hammeistein, 206
 Hampton, Louise, 191
 Hanbury-Williams, Maj.-Gen. Sir John,
 86
 Harcourt, Sir William, 248
 Hardy, Thomas, 232
 Hare, Sir John, 162, 209
 Harris, Sir Charles, 37
 Harris, Robert, 191
 Harvey, Sir Martin, 78
 Hassan, 137, 151
- Hawkins, Jack, 222
 Henry, Prince, 203, 225
 Hesse, Landgravine of, 164
 Hewins, W. A. S., 142
 Higgins, Sir John, 186
 Hoare, Sir Samuel, 126
 Hohenlohe, Prince, 130
 Holland, Lady, 88
 Horne, Lord, 135
 Howard de Walden, Lord, 89
 Howard-Vyse, Brig., 76
 Humbert, King, 230
 Hutton, Major, 115
- If*, 113
Immortal Salient, The, 175
 Inge, Dean, 165
 Irving, Sir Henry, 50, 61, 189
 Iveagh, Lord, 124
- Jacqueline*, 122
 James, Mrs. Arthur, 227
 James, Willie, 64
 Jaures, 9
 Jennings, Gertrude, 79
 Jerrold, Mary, 117
 Joffre, Mme., 24, 32
 Joffre, Marshal, 13, 24, 32-4, 41, 62
 81, 86, 97, 127, 253
 John, Augustus, 83
Julius Caesar, 78
- KEANE, DORIS, 60
 Kendal, Mrs., 67, 117, 145, 191
 Kendal, W. H., 50
 Kerensky, 71
 Keynes, J. M., 77, 155
 Khedive, the, 47
 King, Dr., 57
 Kipling, Rudyard, 229, 250
 Kitchener, Lord, 11-17, 20, 24-6, 31,
 33, 35, 37-40, 42-6, 48, 52, 64, 66,
 75, 78, 80, 84, 86, 96-7, 105, 114,
 117, 119, 129, 139, 152-4, 168-9,
 175-6, 183, 193, 202, 208, 220, 224,
 227, 234, 241, 259-60
- LABOUCHERE, HENRY, 91, 120, 157
La Gloire, 122
 La Vallière, Eve, 222
 Langtry, Mrs., 180
 Lansdowne, Lord, 210
 Lavery, Lady, 95, 105
 Lavery, Sir John, 105
 Law, Bonar, 39, 143, 185, 235, 238
 Lawrence, Col., 212, 215
 Lawton, 222
 Learmonth, Nigel, 114

INDEX

- Le Blond, Mrs., 195
 Le Grand, Mme., 211
 Lee, Sidney, 189, 210
 Leeds, Mrs., 80
 Leigh, Lord, 237
 Lenglen, Susanne, 194
 Lewisham, Lord, 243
 Lhopital, 252
 Liddon, Dean, 173
 Lincolnshire, Marquess of, 226, 242
 Lindo, Olga, 177
 Liverpool, Lord, 220
 Lloyd, Sir Francis, 17, 37-8
 Lloyd George, 30, 40, 49, 50, 54, 70, 74,
 77-8, 91, 94, 99, 103, 110, 117-
 18, 128, 133-4, 136, 138-9, 155,
 158, 185, 198, 207, 219-20, 259
 Lohr, Marie, 117
 Long, Lord, 154
 Lorne, Marquess of, 104
 Louis XIV, 54, 233
 Louise, Princess, 104
 Lowther, Claud, 12, 158
 Lowther, James (Lord Ullswater), 108
 Luynes, Duc de, 141
 Lyons, Lord, 252

 McGRIGOR, 137
 McKenna, Reginald, 30
 Mackintosh, Angus, 156
Madame Butterfly, 63
 Mahon, Gen. Sir Bryan, 115
 Manchester, Duchess of, 88
 Mapleson, 206
 Marie, Empress, 10
 Marie, Grand Duchess, 22
 Marie of Greece, Princess, 34, 41
 Marie, Queen, 116
 Marker, 16, 114
 Markham, S. F., 210
 Marlborough, Duke of, 159, 203
 Marlborough, Sarah, Duchess of, 199
 Marlborough, the first Duke of, 181
 Mary of Teck, Princess, 104, 144, 164
 Mary, Queen, 13, 16, 26-7, 47, 49, 52,
 59, 72, 74-5, 93, 110, 113, 147, 182,
 212, 225, 243
 Maugham, Somerset, 102, 177
 Maxwell, Brig.-Gen. F. A., 114
 Maxwell, Gen. Sir John, 40, 168
 Melba, 60
 Mellon, Andrew, 140
 Mensdorff, Count, 12
 Meredith, George, 232
Merry Widow, The, 106
 Mestorino, 228
 Methuen, Lord, 79, 80, 252
 Metternich, Princess, 121, 208

 Meyer, Arthur, 157
 Michael, Grand Duke, 20
 Michelham, Lord, 50
 Milford Haven, Lady, 137
 Miller, Gilbert, 78
 Mullerand, 98-100, 160
 Milner, Lord, 86, 96, 176
 Molière, 61
 Moncheur, Baron, 148-9
 Mond, Sir Alfred (Lord Melchett), 105,
 117
 Monro, Gen. Sir Charles, 83
 Montagu, E. S., 105, 115
 Morley, Lord, 125, 150
 Morris, Hon. George, 16
 Moscovitch, 78
 Mouchy, Duc de, 192
 Mouchy, Duchesse de, 97, 209

 NAPOLEON I, 256
 Napoleon III, 12, 76
 Naylor-Leyland, Lady, 193
 Neilson, Julia, 67
 Nesbitt, Cathleen, 247
 Nethersole, Olga, 162
 Nettlefolds, the, 67
 Newcastle, Duke of, 89
 Newcastle, the late Duke of, 141
 Nicholas of Montenegro, King, 106
 Nicholas, Tsar, 20
 Nicolson, Hon. Harold, 174
 Niemeyer, Sir Otto, 155
 Nivelle, Gen., 158, 251
 Norfolk, Duke of, 241
 Norman, Sir Montagu, 140
 Northcliffe, Lord, 109, 112, 115, 125,
 135, 237
 Norway, Queen of, 93
 Novello, Ivor, 120

 OLGA, QUEEN, 80
 Olivier, the choir boy, 245
 Orleans, Duke of, 190
 Ormathwaite, Lord, 86
 Ouida, 110, 206
 Oxford, Lord, *see* Asquith

 PAGE, U.S. AMBASSADOR, 182-3
 Paget, Arthur, 246
 Paget, Bishop of Chester, 236
 Paget, Bishop of Oxford, 236
 Paget, Lady Walpurga, 155
 Palmerston, Lady, 204
 Palmerston, Lord, 227
 Panouse, Vicomte de la, 74, 179-80
 Patricia, Princess, 53
 Patti, Adelina, 60

INDEX

- Paul, Grand Duke, 54
 Pavlova, Anna, 85, 213
 Pearson, Sir C. Arthur, 124-5
 Peel, Lord, 175
 Peel, Sir Robert, 95, 102
 Pelham-Holles, 89
 Pershing, Gen., 120
 Pétain, Gen., 251
 Petrograd, Archbishop of, 92
 Pierson, Blanche, 79, 162
 Pinero, Sir Arthur, 173
 Pitoeffs, the, 222
 Pitt, 141
 Plumer, Lord, 135, 256
 Poincaré, 67, 72, 79, 135-6, 160, 166, 179, 228, 240
 Poincaré, Mme., 175
 Ponsonby, Sir Henry, 62
 Portland, Duke of, 89
 Pourtalès, Mme. de, 88
 Prades, Georges, 61
 Prince Consort, the, 45, 90
 Probyn, Sir Dighton, 21, 152
 Puccini, 63
 Pulteney, Lt.-Gen. Sir William, 78, 175
- QUARTERMAINE, LEO, 61, 151
- Ram*, 177
 Rampolla, Cardinal, 146
 Rathbone, Basil, 151, 168
 Rathmore, Lord, 64
 Rawlinson, Lord, 12, 83
 Reeves, Sims, 90
 Rejane, 218
 Repington, Col., 80, 237
 Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 64, 248
 Ribblesdale, Lord, 182
 Ripon, Lady, 26
 Ripon, Lord, 150
 Ristori, 145
 Robb, Maj.-Gen. Sir Frederick, 35
 Roberts, Earl, 19, 45, 52, 66, 119
 Robertson, Sir J. Forbes, 191, 247
 Robertson, Gen. Sir William, 56, 85, 198, 226
 Roche, Raphael, 231
 Romney, 193
 Ronaldshay, Lord, 225
 Rosebery, Lord, 127
 Rostand, 122
 Rothermere, Lord, 143
 Rothschild, Alfred de, 64, 186, 230
 Rothschild, Baroness Alphonse, 119, 208-9, 241
 Rothschild, Charles, 154
 Rothschild, Lord, 26, 120
 Roumania, Queen of, 116, 159-60
 Runciman, Walter, 84
 Russell, George, 73
 Russell, Lord John, 89, 236
- SAGAN, MME. DE, 98, 197-8
 Salisbury, Lord, 50, 93, 118, 164
 Samuel, Sir Herbert, 23
 Santley, Kate, 140
 Sardou, Victorien, 162
 Sargent, 95, 186
 Sarraïl, Gen., 181
 Sassoon, Lady, 186
 Sassoon, Sir Philip, 110, 208
 Saxe-Weimar, Princess Edward of, 129-30
 Schoen, Baron, 10
 Sclater, 154
 Scott, C. P., 199, 200
 Seaman, Sir Owen, 96
 Serbia, Crown Prince of, 40
 Serbia, King of, 135
 Sermoneta, Duchess, 230
 Shackleton, Sir Ernest, 109
 Shakespeare, 143-4, 189
 Shaw, Bernard, 83, 222
 Smillie, Robert, 88
 Smith, F. E., *see* Birkenhead
 Smith-Dorrien, Gen. Sir Horace, 13, 39
 Smuts, Gen., 112, 223
 Sneyd, Mrs., 152
 Sophie, Queen, 36
 Sorel, Cécile, 201
 Spain, Queen Ena of, 22, 93, 247, 259
 Spender, Mrs., 42
 Spiridio, 112
 Staël, Mme. de, 130
 Stamer, Baron, 149
 Stamfordham, Lord, 35, 115, 212
 Standish, Mrs., 98, 211, 255
 Stanley, Dean, 237
 Stanley, Lord, 168
 Stanton, Father, 73, 254
 Stevenson, Miss Frances, 139
 Stevenson, R. L., 93
 Strachey, Lytton, 204, 246
 Stradbroke, Lord, 186
 Strathmore, Lord, 140
 Sullivan, Sir Arthur, 58-9, 106
 Sutton, Sir Richard, 122
Swan, The, 168
 Sweden, King of, 106
 Sweden, Queen of, 106
 Sykes, Sir Mark, 118
- TAGLIONI, 85
 Tait, Bishop, 237
 Talbot, Lord Edmund (Lord Fitzalan), 105, 109

INDEX

- Teck, Duke of, 35
 Tempest, Marie, 142, 191
 Terry, Ellen, 60, 191, 230
 Terry, Marion, 117, 191
 Tree, Lady, 79, 162
 Treves, Sir Frederick, 182
 Tweed, John, 154, 175

 VALLIÈRE, LOUISE DE LA, 222
 Van Druten, 247
 Vendôme, Duc de, 20
 Venizelos, 36
 Victoria, Queen, 12, 45, 49, 53, 96, 104,
 112, 129, 135, 137, 157, 163, 189-
 90, 237, 239, 243
 Vidor, M., 255
 Viviani, 127, 180
 Von Donop, 80-1
Vortex, The, 167

 WADDINGTON, 119
 Waddington, Mme., 15
 Wales, Prince of, 20-1, 23, 42-3, 57, 62,
 78, 87, 100, 110, 115, 123, 166, 168,
 171, 181, 190, 199, 252
 Walsh, Mrs., 157
 Walsh, Stephen, 157
 Wandsworth, Lord, 50
 Watt, Major, 177

 Wedel, Baron, 10
 Wellington, Duke of, 45, 56, 119, 182,
 220
 Wendover, Lord, 227
 Westminster, Duke of, 39
 Weygand, 181
 Wigram, Sir Clive, 16
 Wilhelm, Crown Prince, 230
 Wilhelm, Kaiser, 15, 18, 22, 36, 56, 230
 Williams, Hwfa, 193
 Wilson, Lady, 207
 Wilson, Sir Henry, 49, 207
 Wilson, Woodrow, 182
 Wingate, Sir Reginald, 43, 68, 159
 Winterton, Lord, 117-18
 Wiseman, Cardinal, 116
 Wolseley, Field-Marshal Lord, 47, 79,
 119, 132, 151, 232
 Wordsworth, 197
 Worthington-Evans, Sir L., 179, 229
 Wyndham, Charles, 50
 Wyndham, George, 169-70
 Wynne, Lady Watkin, 155

 YASHKA, 71
 Younger, Lord, 128

 ZAGHILUL PASHA, 159
 Zanzibar, Frank Weston, Bishop of, 167

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